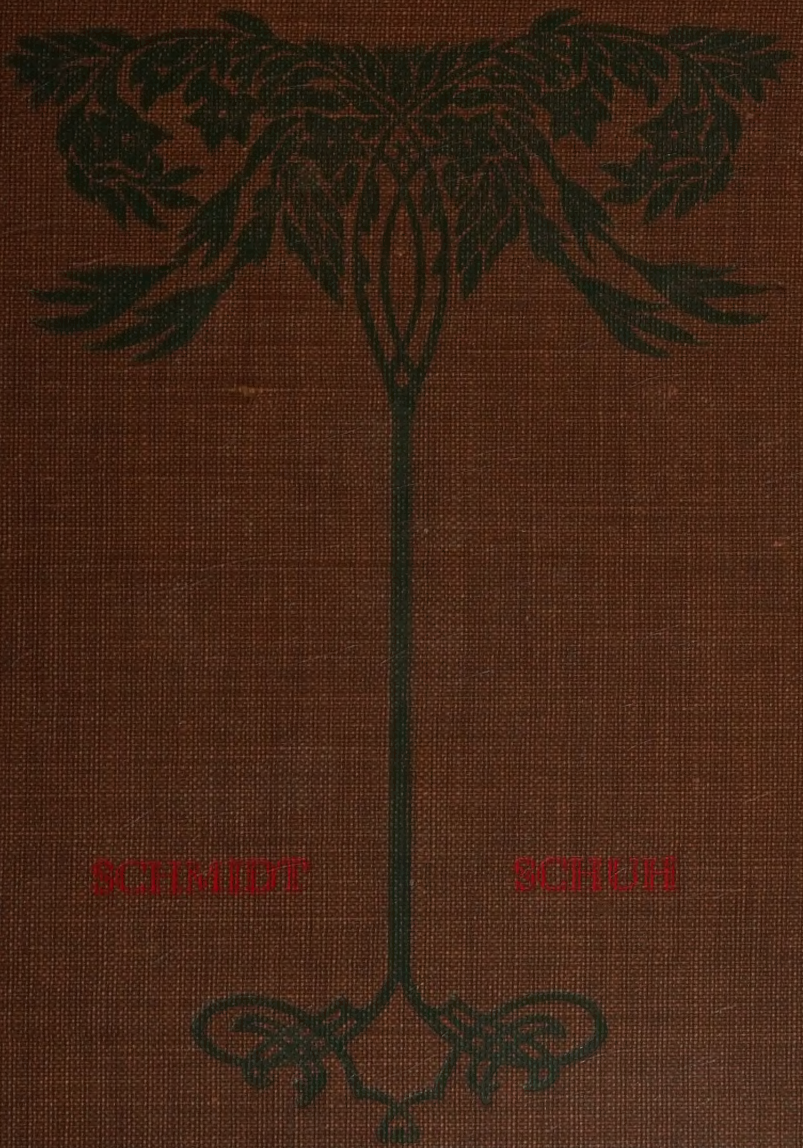
THROUGH LUTHER TO LIBERTY



SCHMIDT SCHUH

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Through Luther to Liberty

A Story of the Reformation Period

BY

WM. SCHMIDT

AND

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"If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

—John 6, 36.

L. B. C.
FIFTH THOUSAND
1915

FOREWORD.

IN sending the historical novel, *Through Luther to Liberty,* into Christian homes — may it be received and read in many! — a few words of introduction are pertinent. It may be objected while the book is read that such an unsavory subject as the fall of a priest should have been omitted. We insist at the very outset that the historical setting would have been incomplete without some such reference to priestly profligacy. When Rome was on the height of its power, it was a cesspool of vice: every type of immorality was not merely in vogue among high and low, but also dispensation to practice it could be secured from the Roman Catholic authorities—for a consideration. More discreetly than in this story, that phase of Roman Catholic corruption could hardly be pictured. To be true to facts, we had to supply the picture.

May the reader also observe the hunger for grace and truth felt by the persons whose passage from popish bondage to the liberty in Christ is described in our story. We American Lutherans have the Gospel; there is no power that can deprive us of our freedom in Christ against our will; but are there not many of us that have no more relish for the Word of God than the Israelites had for the manna in the wilderness? May the heroes and heroines of our story teach us relish for the bread of life — often unappreciated because so convenient and plentiful.

A glimpse of martyrdom is vouchsafed in our story, to remind its readers of the sacrifices made, the sufferings endured, by the first witnesses of the Gospel as restored by Martin Luther. No one in Protestant countries — thanks to Martin Luther! —

need now fear the martyrdom of death. The martyrdom of life — the life hidden with Christ in God — remains with its sacrifices, will remain to the end of time. May the book incline its readers to participation in the sacrifices for which the impending fourth centennial of the Reformation calls in behalf of a greater and stronger and holier Lutheran Church!

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CHAPTER I.

In the Little Tailor Shop.

"MOTHER, if I only could believe that!"

"Good old Father Anselm told me that fifty years ago, when, sick unto death after your birth, I received extreme unction. I was in the same condition in which you are now; I could find no peace; the more I endeavored to live after the regulations of the church the more I recognized my sinfulness. On my death-bed, on which, at that time, I thought myself lying, the fear of judgment and purgatory drove me to despair. Even the body of our Lord brought me no peace; for, believing myself to be unworthy, I feared I had received it to judgment. Mother Mary and all the saints to whom I cried did not deliver me from my hellish fear. Then the priest stooped over me and whispered into my ear: 'Cast aside everything else, and hold only to our dear Lord Jesus Christ.'"

"And this you are just telling us, after fifty years?"

"I considered it a kind of confessional secret; but I always told you that I base my hopes of salvation only upon the sufferings and death of Christ, and in this faith I have peace. I also intended to tell you how I came to this blessed faith before my end should come. Good Father Anselm long since was put under the sod, but in eternity I will thank him for the comfort bestowed at what I thought was my death-bed."

It was on Sylvester Eve, fifteen twenty-four, in a village of the Luneburg Heath about a day's journey from Luneburg, when this conversation took place between the tailor Peter Hinnark Smid and his mother, a woman of eighty years. True, in Witten-

berg the blessed light of the pure Gospel shone for some years, but even in the great cities of Hamburg and Luneburg scarcely a ray was noticeable until then, while the country districts were altogether steeped in darkness.

Smid was an earnest man, willing to make sacrifices for salvation. That day, the last day of the year, like all business men, he cast up his accounts. He did it mentally, since he could write only with difficulty; yet he was soon done. He was a small farmer, tilling his few acres of land with the help of wife and child; in addition, he went diligently to the surrounding farmers to sew. Since he avoided the tavern and had a capable housewife, he succeeded well in earthly matters, even though he belonged to the lower class. He even had a few dollars in his chest, had some wages outstanding, and for the next week he was again invited to the castle, where he always received the best wages. He understood his trade, having, the first journeyman of his village, succeeded in traveling as far as Hamburg and Bremen. Piously he folded his hands after going over his accounts and thanked the Giver of all good for his earthly blessings.

But when he began to cast up his spiritual account, he soon got into distressing difficulty. The children had been put to bed, and he sat alone with his wife and mother in the low living-room, which was heated by a peat-oven. There he finally poured out his vexed heart to his dear ones. It had sought peace in the work-righteousness of the Romish church, but had not found it. At all this his wife merely sighed. She had the same experience as her spouse, though she found greater comfort in the Mother of God, who, with her tender, womanly heart, would soften her Son, the dreadful Judge. The mother, however, broke her fifty years' silence, and stated why she trusted alone in the Savior of sinners.

"I fear," said the tailor after a long pause, "that good Father Anselm merely wanted to help you

through the pains of death. How can that be true? If it were, we should have nothing more to do and suffer for our sins, and be sure of our salvation. Only recently the priest preached that it would be presumption to wish for assurance of salvation; for nobody is perfect, save the saints. Your faith is too beautiful to be true."

"It has made me happy, and I shall die happy in it."

"Why do not all priests at all times preach this doctrine?"

"Child, I do not know that myself, but do we not say in the second article: 'Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried?' I believe that he died for us poor sinners, so that we might live for ever."

"But does the article not close with the fearful words: 'From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead?' For the saints he may indeed have removed all the dread penalties of purgatory, but we must do penance, probably in eternity."

He arose and went to the cupboard in the wall, and took out an old sheet, which he studied a long time, finally giving vent to his emotion by saying: "At that time, in Bremen, I gave three months' wages for this letter of indulgence, but it brought me no peace. Yes, if, like our priest, I had been in Rome itself, and had there received full indulgence on the strength of my pilgrimage, it might be different. The priest fully trusts in the indulgence so received; only in this way, of course, he can preserve a good conscience in view of his hard drinking. I do not care to go to the confessional when he is in it. The last time he was in the confessional chair he was so drunk that he scarcely knew what he was saying. In Wittenberg a monk has arisen against the selling of indulgence, who teaches that only true repentance of the heart can help you. One of his pupils, Henry von Zuetpfen, is reported to be preaching against the selling of indulgence, and even against the pope himself.

He is doing this in Bremen and in Ditmar, a son of my neighbors recently told me, who visited relatives in Bremen. If it were not winter, I believe that I would undertake the long journey to hear this monk."

"No, father," replied his wife, "do not get yourself and all of us into trouble. Did you not often tell us about Huss, the heretic, whom they burned at the stake because he preached against the Holy Father? I fear that this Henry von Zuetpfen will not last long. At the last confession the priest inquired why you remained away so long; he remarked that he trusted you were still free from the infection of this Lutheran heresy."

"Did he really say that?" the tailor asked, astonished. "And what did you answer him?"

"I could not lie, at least not in the confessional chair. Frightened at first, I kept still, but when he urged me and threatened me with the worst punishments of purgatory if I hid anything, I told him that you had not yet read a page of Luther, and had merely heard that he was contending against the sale of indulgence. That, finally, satisfied him."

She did not venture to tell that the priest had taken a solemn promise from her to watch her husband very carefully, and to announce at once any evidence of heresy. This made her heart as heavy as a stone.

The tailor leaped to his feet in excitement, and began to pace up and down the room in great haste. But before he could resume the conversation, a firm, quick step was heard on the outside. Mother Smid, greatly perturbed, said to her husband:

"Be careful not to say anything to Hinnark about our conversation!"

With a happy "good evening," a man stepped into the room. He might have served the poet Longfellow as a model for his "Village Smith," had he been a little older. Tall of stature and broad of shoulder, he could just about pass through the low door. His open face was quite ruddy from his work before

the fire, which he had just left. His eyes and hair were dark, an inheritance from his mother, who came from the land of the Wends.

"Why do you come so late?" quickly asked the mother in order that the father might not continue the former conversation.

"The two younkers von Uhlenhorst, together with Herr Hans von Hasselbach, came riding after supper to the tavern, and Younker Kurt demanded that I should shoe his horse at once.

"When I told him that the shoes would be good for several weeks yet, he struck at me with his riding-whip and used the profanest of language about a fool craftsman who would dare to gainsay a nobleman. I jumped to one side. Had he struck me, I believe I would have jerked him from the horse."

"For God's sake!" cried the mother, severely frightened. "Child, curb your hot blood! They would have killed you with their swords."

The father, who was likewise a strong man, even though he was not so tall as his oldest son, mindful of his humble station, said nothing.

But Hinnark continued: "Younker von Hasselbach interposed and said laughingly: 'Churl, you had better shoe the horse. What is it to you whether it is necessary or not? You will get your money and, in addition, a good drink for working late.' 'The drink you have to pay for yourself!' thereupon yelled Younker Kurt. 'I will give the churl only the wages he has earned. You seem to be a rich gentleman!' The last words were accompanied by an ironical laugh. Evidently he had already drunk deep, and was not on good footing with Younker von Hasselbach. When I had completed the work, Younker Kurt cast the money at my feet. Angry, I wished to go out; but the master, who had been sitting there all evening, commanded me to pick it up, and Younker Hans himself brought me the promised drink."

"That the two knights are not the best of friends, I am perfectly willing to believe," said the father.

"Both have cast their eyes upon our young lady. The parents, especially the mother, prefer the rich cousin; but Miss Elsa prefers the poor knight von Hasselbach, as I well observed the last time I worked at the castle. That Uhlenhorst lad seems to be a low fellow. It is even reported that he has loaded a heavy debt upon his fine paternal inheritance, and, for this reason, seeks the hand of our rich young lady. But, Hinnark, get your slate, so that, in the future, writing may be easier for you than it is for me. These are serious, troublous times, in which no man can learn too much. Sometime, when you go on your journeys, writing may be of great use to you."

His innermost thought, that his son might sometime travel southward and copy a book of the daring monk Luther, he did not venture that day to express. Hinnark was a brave, intelligent boy, who from his youth preferred the smithy to the tailor shop. When he shot up so mightily, his sponsor, Ehlers the smith, said: "Smid, you must give the boy to me; he will break all your needles anyway. Your second son can help you while my boys are still small."

So Hinnark went to his sponsor, Master Ehlers, where he was treated like one of the children. Soon he relieved the master, who was corpulent and slow, of the most of his work.

Obediently the big lad took the slate and copied the capitals and small letters, following an old copy, which the father had once upon a time brought from abroad. It was a much more difficult task for him than had been the work of shoeing horses a short time before. However, he enjoyed it, and the father could soon exclaim in approval: "You are already a better penman than myself. Keep up your efforts, and you will soon be able to write a letter."

Again a rapidly approaching step was heard; a girl, eighteen years of age, leaped into the room so quickly that her heavy blond braids fairly waved in the air. "Father Smid!" she cried breathless, "A jour-

neyman has just arrived who says that, in the neighborhood of Ditmar, a monk has been burned alive as a heretic."

All sprung to their feet in alarm; even grandmother rose trembling from her arm-chair.

"That is Henry von Zuetpfen," said the father with a trembling voice.

"Yes, that is his name," said the girl. "Have you already heard of him? It is reported that he preached the new doctrine of a monk called Luther, and for this reason he has been burned. Out of joy our priest emptied a beer-glass of whiskey, and now he rails dreadfully at the brood of heretics. He says that also here heresy is beginning to spook, but that he will stamp it out, since it is just as easy to burn one on the heath as in the marsh."

"Merciful Savior, deliver us!" sighed the mother. But the father, pale as a sheet, said to his son: "I will not go to the tavern, least of all when there are drunkards there. Hinnark, you go and hear all that the journeyman has to say, but see that you do not get in the way of the knights."

"Come quickly, Hinnark!" said the girl, "I just ran away for a moment after I filled up the bumpers." But on the outside she took the companion of her youth by the arm and whispered into his ear: "Do not go away again before the younkers take leave. Kurt von Uhlenhorst has drunk heavily and is getting ugly."

"Even toward you?" said the young smith, clenching his hard fist.

"Do not be rash, Hinnark, but be sure to stay there!"

CHAPTER II.

At the Tavern.

IT was only too true: Henry von Zuetpfen had been cruelly executed on account of his Evangelical faith. True, at that time there occurred also on the part of the Evangelicals excesses against the monks, nuns, and other adherents of the pope. The times were very crude, and the fanaticism which Rome had raised through the centuries by executing heretics and witches by the hundreds of thousands could not at once be banished from among the nations. Here also Luther, blazing the way, said: "I will preach the truth, but will force no one."

The Lutheran Church has no guilty conscience for burning heretics. After the Reformation, Rome fairly began to burn and to kill. Spain, France, the Netherlands; also Germany, Italy and other countries were saturated with the blood of Evangelical martyrs. Rome never once condemned the burning of heretics, and would resort to it today if it had the power.

The inhabitants of Bremen permitted the zealous Lutheran monk Henry von Zuetpfen to carry on his work, the wishes of their archbishop, Christopher, to the contrary notwithstanding. But when he went to the people of Ditmar, he found a frightful end at the hands of these "monkburners," as they were afterwards called. In a December night he was snatched from bed and, clad only in a shirt, he was tied to the tail of a horse and dragged over the frozen ground until he could scarcely go forward upon his bleeding feet. Mocked, beaten, spit upon, he still preserved his heroic faith and his love for his enemies, as only a Christian martyr could do. Even when he was compelled to witness the attempt of his enemies to kindle the pile of fagots, when he had bled for hours from twenty wounds, he was tranquil and resigned. When, at last, it burned, the beastly desire

for murder on the part of those wretched fellows had become so intense that they could not wait for the effect of the fire, but began to beat their victim till he no longer showed signs of life.

"At it, dear brethren!" one of them exclaimed while the foul deed was perpetrated. "God is with us." "They will think that they are doing God service therein"—that is the Savior's comment on just such deeds of darkness.

Scarcely had Dortie Peters, after a swift run, arrived before the tavern when she heard her name called from the outside.

Quickly she whispered to her companion:

"Stay here awhile, that they may not guess where I have been." Thereupon she slipped in.

"Where in all the world have you been when there are such noble guests to serve?" shouted the fat tavern-keeper.

"Here, wench, fill my bumper! A drink tastes twice as good to me when it is offered by the hand of a fair one."

With flushed cheek the girl hastened to Kurt von Uhlenhorst, who had issued the boisterous order, to get his bumper.

But the younker held on to it, and grabbed the girl by the arm, which he pinched until, unable to suppress a little scream, she jerked herself free.

"Do not a second time allow a nobleman to wait!" he shouted after her with laughter, in which his cousin Ulrich joined him.

Kurt von Uhlenhorst was twenty-eight years old, but appeared far older. That he had spent the last ten years in riotous living, could be read plainly upon his flushed face, which originally would have been attractive, had not the small, piercing, gray eyes given it a sinister appearance.

His cousin at his side was only twenty, but an inclination to excess was already showing itself upon his fair young face. Cousin Kurt was a bad schoolmaster.

The third knight was likewise only twenty, but his high stature and his open, manly, beautiful face and the serious eyes made him appear older. He did not laugh with them, but looked rather displeased when he saw Younker Kurt's rudeness. His leather doublet looked shabby, compared with the velvet jackets of his comrades, for he was the poorest of the nobles of that region. His parents had died early, and his castle, six miles distant from Uhlenhorst, was little better than a farm-house. He seldom came to the city. On the other hand, he had inherited from his father a number of books, which he read diligently, while many in his station at that time could scarcely read. In all knightly exercises the father himself, who had been in Italy with Emperor Maximilian, had instructed him. After the father's death a year ago, he, the godchild of Hans von Uhlenhorst, was often at the latter's castle, which presently was to acquire an additional attraction for him.

"Really, the wench has a set of braids of which a noblewoman might be envious," said Younker Kurt, following the beautiful form of the maiden with maudlin eyes.

But the priest shouted: "You must bring me another glass of whiskey, but not a small one. This message of joy must be properly celebrated."

"What were the chief heresies charged against the monk?" Hans von Hasselbach asked the journeyman.

"I have only heard that, like Luther, he preached against papal indulgence, and taught that men are saved alone by grace through the blood of Jesus Christ."

"There could not be a worse heresy!" yelled the priest. "For do I not build all my hope on the plenary indulgence acquired through a vexatious pilgrimage to the holy city?"

"My father brought a proverb from Italy which says: 'The nearer Rome, the worse the Christian.'" remarked Younker Hans.

"That is only a soldier's witticism," hotly answered the priest." "Has Rome not the greatest and finest churches and the most costly relics in the world?"

"And the worst band of robbers," remarked the younker.

"Are you, too, already infected with the Lutheran poison?" the priest asked angrily, "I did not see any robbers there."

"They would scarcely attack a poor monk," Younker Hans explained with a light smile. However, he preferred to drop the dangerous theme.

The priest, now thoroughly angry, emptied his large glass of whiskey and ordered still another, though he could scarcely articulate his words.

In the meantime Hinnark came quietly in, and sat down in the corner unobserved.

"Let the church be what it will," said Kurt von Uhlenhorst, "heresy must be pulled up by the root or the farmers will soon wish to be noblemen. Already last week we heard in Luneburg all kinds of reports concerning the peasant uprisings in Swabia and elsewhere in the realm. All this is to be charged against the miserable monk of Wittenberg. If his elector were not a good-natured old fool he would quietly have delivered him to the Romanists after the Diet of Worms, as Emperor Sigismund once upon a time did with Huss. They would long since have dealt with him as they have done with this von Zuetpfen."

'You should not speak thus about the uncle of our ruler," quietly said Hans von Hasselbach. "He is rightly called Frederick the Wise."

"I do not need a teacher," excitedly answered von Uhlenhorst. "I contend that it was a piece of folly to hide Luther at Wartburg."

The priest once more wished to deliver himself concerning the brood of heretics, but the last glass had proved too much for him. He only managed to bring out a few vile threats; then his head sank heavily upon the table. Like many in his station at

that time, he was a poor, ignorant man, who could scarcely read the mass—a blind leader of the blind. The fact that he was a priest saved the office for him. In an Evangelical congregation such a spiritual adviser would have been an impossibility. For this also the world must thank Luther.

"This way, pretty Dortie! Do you not notice that my bumper is empty again?" now shouted Younker Kurt.

With reluctance and anything but haste, the girl fulfilled his wish. She feared his passionate looks, and stayed away from him as far as possible.

"Why do you hesitate?" said the knight with a shrill laugh, "I will cure you of your pretended modesty."

With this he leaped to his feet, seized the neck of the girl with both hands and attempted to kiss her. Dortie thrust the bumper into his face, and defended herself with all her might. However, this resistance made the half-drunk man even more determined, and he certainly would have carried his point, had the maid not received help. It came simultaneously from two directions. True, the fat tavern-keeper did not stir. Quite willingly he had taken his niece, an orphan, into his house; for she was quick as few, and that her attractive form pleased his guests and incited them to drink was altogether acceptable to him. Neither did his son Jacob, who cultivated the land, bestir himself, although he liked his beautiful cousin very much and would have thought of marriage, had she not been so poor. He was much too timid in the presence of noblemen. Then, out of the corner, with a mighty stride, came the smith, forgetting the warnings of his father. However, another had already preceded him. Hans von Hasselbach, sitting near, seized Kurt's right hand and jerked it away from the girl's neck. At the same time he said earnestly:

"Kurt, do not forget yourself! It is not chivalrous to take a kiss by force."

While his act had saved Dortie from insult, the anger of Kurt knew no bounds.

"A boy like you, hardly able to raise a mustache, dares to charge an imperial ensign with unknightly conduct?" he yelled at Younker Hans. "This insult can be paid only in blood."

Younker Ulrich took sides with his older cousin and roared:

"This is an insult to a nobleman!"

Hans von Hasselbach remained quietly seated, even after Kurt in his rage had drawn the long sword half way out of its sheath. He merely laid his hand upon the arm of young Uhlenhorst and asked him with intense earnestness:

"Would you allow your sister Elsa to be treated in this way by a drunken man?"

"Only a dog of a younker can compare the noble lady von Uhlenhorst with a barmaid; and a mad dog should be killed!" shouted the older Uhlenhorst.

The murderous sword of the raving fellow was drawn. Younker Hans, to defend himself, now leaped to his feet. But before he could even draw his sword half-way, he would have been pierced by his opponent, if the fist of the young blacksmith had not seized the murderous hand and wrenched the weapon from it.

"Sir, no murder!" he warned the knight.

The disarmed ruffian for a moment was quite speechless over the daring of the smith. Beside himself, the younker roared:

"Clod-hopper, take that for your audacity!"

With this he struck at the head of the blacksmith.

He, however, lifted the sword that he had taken from the knight for his defense. Now Younker Hans, enraged by the insulting words of Kurt, shouted:

"This way with your knightly sword for an honorable duel! Hinnark, return the sword! Not a hair of yours shall be touched as long as I can hold the sword. You, Ulrich, wait until we two have done! If you then think that I have insulted your sister be-

cause I defended that innocent girl against a drunken man, I shall be at your service."

These manly words did not miss their mark. Younker Ulrich sheathed his sword, and Younker Kurt was so far sobered that he recognized the seriousness of the situation.

"With this fool here I will settle some other time, but one of us two is superfluous on earth. Defend yourself, youngster, against the sword of a man!"

With that Kurt made a fierce lunge at the breast of his opponent. He was known as one of the best fencers in his regiment, and was, no doubt, the superior of his young opponent in the art of fighting. But Younker Hans, having drunk very moderately, was the equal of the other in strength. Therefore the issue of the battle was in doubt, when suddenly it was ended in a way as terrible as it was unforeseen.

The din had aroused the priest. When he saw the gleaming swords he leaped to his feet in a deadly fright. Pressing his heart with his right hand, he fell on the floor with a groan.

When Hans hesitated for a moment to continue the duel, Younker Kurt said:

"Drunk as a log; go on!"

But Hinnark, who had leaped quickly forward to protect the head of the priest against a severe knock, shouted in alarm:

"He has had an apoplectic stroke; he has ceased to breathe."

CHAPTER III.

At the Castle.

CASTLE UHLENHORST was situated two miles from the scene just described, upon the crown of a hill; hard by was the village bearing its name. The creek flowing along its base, and also past the village, furnished the water for the moat that surrounded the thick castle walls. Of squat and massive architecture, this lordly castle, with the stables and outbuildings surrounding it, testified to the prosperity of its owner. The master of Uhlenhorst, a good agriculturist, called many thousand acres his own.

Stepping, on the morning following the above incident, into his hall for breakfast, he appeared to be a man of about fifty years, and strong of girth. His full face, with its round, friendly, blue eyes, was rather ruddy, which was partly the result of his healthy life in the open air, partly of his strong eating and drinking, which Younker Hans, like nearly all noblemen of his time, enjoyed immensely.

He found his only daughter waiting for him in the hall. As soon as he appeared, she came toward him and wished him a happy New-year. With pride and love his eyes rested upon her, and he had cause for his fatherly pride. Having grown tall and slender, with a healthy, lovely countenance, from which, however, her bright blue eyes shone rather seriously, she, on this fine winter morning, looked greatly like her father in the days of his youth. Her wealth of blond hair, coming down upon her hips in two heavy braids, was especially striking.

"Joy of my heart and my image!" he said, putting his arm tenderly around her neck and kissing her upon the forehead. "But why do your lovely eyes look so serious at the beginning of the new year?"

She did not answer, but laid her head with a slight sigh upon his broad breast. The father stroked her hair and said in reasurring tones:

"I believe I can guess your sorrow. Mother wishes to marry you to rich Kurt, and you like poor Hans much better." This remark caused the girl's grief to vent itself in a loud sob, so that the father said in deep sympathy:

"Nobody can think hard of you for that."

Of course, he was alarmed when, at that very moment, the stately form of his wife appeared in the door. Really, he had not meant to say that; for his own judgment told him that a union of his Elsa with cousin Kurt would be more advantageous for the whole family. That he had spent a large part of his paternal inheritance through dissipation, neither he nor his wife knew.

"Did she apologize for her unbecoming conduct toward Younker Kurt?" exclaimed the woman with a stern voice, when she saw Elsa on her father's breast, forgetting the New-year's greeting in her anger at her daughter. In spite of her forty years, she was still a beautiful woman, but evidently very vain and self-indulgent.. While the daughter went about in a simple woolen garment, the mother, early as it was, had dressed herself in velvet and silk, and was loaded with jewelry. As the child of a numerous but poor Luneburg patrician family, she had been set apart in her youth for a select convent. But before her novitiate was ended, she, one day, ran away, and, determined to have her way, she managed to stay at home despite her father's anger. When, soon afterward, the rich widower of Uhlenhorst sought her hand, the offer was quite convenient to the family as well as herself. He needed a mother for his boy; the beautiful city lady pleased him; and he was rich enough to waive a dowry. The marriage, however, did not prove fortunate. The woman, fond of indulgence beyond measure, could only be happy in the city where there were soon all kinds of rumors about her love

affairs. Her husband, ten years her senior, hated city life, which, moreover, cost him too much. In consequence there was frequent strife. Elsa was the exact opposite of her selfish mother in every way. She loved to be with her father in the forest and on the heath. Throughout her girlhood, she experienced very little mother love. When she was grown, the mother seemed almost jealous of the beauty of her own daughter. At least she clothed her with studied simplicity, almost shabbily; and when gentlemen called, she pushed her daughter into the background. The serious look in her eyes was believed to be adverse to her prospects; that was a reason why now, as quickly as possible, she was to be married to her cousin.

At the approach of the mother, Elsa turned rapidly aside and brushed a tell-tale tear away. The father, however, said kindly:

"Just give the girl time! She is only a child, and I scarcely know how I could get along without her."

"She is eighteen years old; I was not too young for you at the same age," said the woman sharply. "Such rich, noble suitors as cousin Kurt are scarce in the land; one must almost be surprised that the highly educated younker seeks our country girl, who does not show a trace of urbanity. You are determined always to stick in this bare nest on the heath, instead of establishing a respectable house in Luneburg, as your means would sufficiently justify."

"But where are the boys?" asked the father, endeavoring to give a different turn to the painful conversation.

"They returned home late," said Elsa.

"Well, it isn't very early now; they could just as well have come to breakfast," suggested the father.

At this moment steps were heard, and Kurt and Ulrich stepped into the hall. Their faces showed plain indications of the nightly spree, and their New-year's greeting did not have a hearty ring.

"Well, I notice that, last night, there was considerable peeping into bumpers at the inn," laughingly said the father. "But where does Hans stay? He is always the most sober of you three."

"The wretch shall no longer come to our castle as long as I abide here," said Ulrich. "He openly insulted sister Elsa by comparing her to a shameless barmaid.

A shriek from his sister showed him that the insidious slander had hit the mark.

However, the father doubtfully shook his head and said:

"He insulting our Elsa? I do not understand that: there is something else back of that."

But the mother spoke with a loud voice:

"I never did like him, the crafty hypocrite, so proud of his knightly honor because he has nothing else. I consider him capable of it."

"He alone was the cause of the death of our poor priest," remarked Younker Kurt.

"What, the priest dead, and Hans the cause of his death?" said the father, now alarmed. "Are you still drunk, or what is the matter, anyway?"

"It is just as Kurt said," continued Younker Ulrich. "The priest in his joy over the burning of the heretic, Henry von Zuetpfen, drank too much. Then, when Hans von Have-nothing so dreadfully insulted Elsa, Kurt challenged him to a duel and, alarmed at the noise of the weapon, the priest was killed by an apopletic stroke and fell to the floor."

The master of Uhlenhorst arose from the table at this fearful message and paced excitedly up and down. His daughter slipped out quietly. Arriving in her chamber, she cast herself upon her knees before her bed and wept as though her heart would break. "It cannot be, it cannot be," she sobbed; "His eyes look too true to lie thus. Now it has become clear to me how much I love him. For all the wealth of the world I would not care to belong to Kurt. His eye is false, and I know that he lies about Hans, and

likewise induces Ulrich to lie, just as he induced him to drink and gamble. But who will tell me the truth if Hans himself may no longer come to us? His godfather does not suspect Hans of anything, but he is easily persuaded to change his mind. If only my half-brother were yet alive! He was always so good to his little sister. But he was killed in the Convent Feud, and my brother Ulrich is altogether different."

Madam von Uhlenhorst, contrary to her custom, at first said nothing at all in regard to this astounding, dreadful news. But it was not the shock over the dreadful death of the priest that caused her to become silent, but something entirely different. No trace of fear or seriousness could be seen in her eyes. Much less was the fire burning in them the glow of a pure heart. With the swiftness of lightning a plan matured in her soul, which she felt constrained to carry out at once. She saw an opportunity which she must embrace at once in order to get rid of the ennui of country life.

On the day following the burial of the priest she spoke of her plan. Her spouse was the patron of the parish. Therefore she said to him as soon as breakfast was on the table:

"Do you still remember Brother Benedict of our congregation in Luneburg? Among the patricians he was a dearly beloved pastor. He would be the man to help us while away our time. He is an expert at the chess board and at the chase, a man of fine, cosmopolitan education. You must appoint him; Abbott Baldwin will permit us to have him, and Archbishop Christopher of Bremen will not withhold his consent."

"But was he not sent back into the monastery at the time because his worldly doings were such an offence to the faithful?"

Madame von Uhlenhorst showed some embarrassment. She did not think that her husband's memory was quite so good.

"Envy on the part of the Barefooted Monks to-

ward the Benedictines caused many charges to be made against the noble priest, and the common people, for whom Herr von Hohenkamp was too stylish, eagerly endorsed the charge, so that the council insisted upon his removal. I never went to any one for confession with greater joy; and I believe that Herr von Hohenkamp himself would rather live on our bare heath than in the monastery, into which, as a younger son, he went without any inclination at all."

That there was a considerable rumor at that time about the relations of this priest to the young Mrs. von Uhlenhorst, her husband, of course, did not know. In his innocence he did not suspect any wrong, but enjoyed the company of this priest, who was a constant associate at his house when he sojourned in Luneburg. Younker Kurt, however, had heard of it; but he raised no objection whatever, since his knowledge of the woman's secret might be of help to him in winning the daughter. At once he seconded the plan of his aunt. Also Knight Ulrich consented; for a gay priest, a cosmopolitan man, was certainly more acceptable to him than the old drunkard, or even than a zealous monk, who would talk to him about heaven and hell. Therefore the patron soon made up his mind in regard to the appointment of a new pastor.

Miss Elsa did not say a single word in the matter. It was the custom in those days for young people not to speak until they were asked. In fact, she had hardly listened; for her heart was still full of what she heard on New-year's morning. She lamented that the old priest was so ignorant and, in addition, such a hard drinker. But the gay gentleman whom her mother and Kurt so warmly recommended was still less welcome to her as a father confessor. She shuddered at the thought of confessing her most secret sins to such a carnally-minded man as this one seemed to be. Yet, without confession, according to the teaching of the church, she could not hope for forgiveness. Sincere as she was, she has hitherto always honestly tried to tell all her sins. She faith-

fully repeated all the Paternosters and Ave Marias that were generally prescribed to her as penance. Later, however, when she thought of sins which she had not confessed, her whole comfort was gone.

When she spoke of this to her pastor, he was wont to say:

"To be sure of your salvation you must enter the convent; there alone you will find a holy life. But absolute certainty you have only if you will make a pilgrimage to the graves of the apostles in the holy city, as I have done."

The young woman had a secret dread of convent life, which had proved so repugnant to her mother. This was especially the case since the image of Hans von Hasselbach had arisen in her soul; as to a pilgrimage to Rome, that was not to be thought of at all.

Suddenly a thought came to her which made an end to her sad reflections. As soon as she could withdraw without observation, she went over into the servants' house to Master Smid, whom she had known and loved from her youth. How many hours she had already spent with him! He could talk so interestingly about his journeys to Bremen and Hamburg; he knew many legends of the saints and much folk lore. From her youth he had been her confidant in the joys and the sorrows of childhood. She did not wish to ask the servants about matters which she scarcely ventured to discuss with her own soul; but the good old tailor would tell her the truth and would never betray her.

Master Smid was likewise engrossed in serious thoughts. The sudden death of the priest brought his own end before his soul in letters of fire; and he trembled as never before at the thought of purgatory and hell. Filled with anxiety, he leaped to his feet when his young friend suddenly accosted him with this question:

"Master, are you sure of your salvation?"

"Child, Miss Elsa, how come you, such a happy young woman, to ask this question?"

"Just continue to call me child, Master, as you have always done. If I only were a child, as formerly, when I could get rid of so many of my little sorrows through the tears wept in your presence! Now my heart is full to breaking, and none of your little tales can quiet it any more. I fear death and hell, and know no way of escape, except that of entering the convent; and that my heart opposes. My mother, who herself was to become a nun, as you no doubt have heard, also thinks that life in a convent is not so holy as the priests make out. Master, you do not go to the tavern, and you pass among all as a good Christian. Tell me, are you sure of your salvation? Do you know of a sure way to heaven?"

The master dropped his needle and shears, sighed deeply, and said in a low, subdued voice:

"With this anxious question I came out of the old year into the new, but no answer have I found."

"Not even you! Where, then, shall I find rest and peace for my poor soul?"

The deep grief written upon her features touched good Master Smid's heart. Anxiously he looked around in the room, to see that nobody else might hear him, and then in a low, mysterious tone, he said to the girl, anxiously waiting a reply:

"You will not betray me; my mother knows a way upon which she has found full peace. I have not yet ventured to follow it; but if you wish, I will tell you."

"Oh, speak! probably I shall find peace in it like your pious mother."

"She says: 'Cast aside everything else and cling only to our Lord Jesus Christ.'"

The young woman looked at the tailor a long time without being able to speak. Finally she said, as if waking from a deep dream:

"That would be glorious! Where did your mother get these glad tidings?"

"Old Father Anselm told her when he administered extreme unction upon the occasion of serious sickness, finding her unable to obtain comfort through anything else," said father Smid, looking around furtively as he spoke. Then he added, urged by his conscience: "I fear, of course, good Father Anselm said more than he can account for. This is not the Roman doctrine, and the journeyman who told about the burning of Henry von Zuetpfen, mentioned this doctrine as one of his heresies."

Deeply frightened, the maid exclaimed:

"Burned for so precious a doctrine? Oh! tell me all you know about it."

While the tailor told what he knew of the death of the Lutheran martyr, all was quiet for a long while in the little tailor shop, till at length the girl drew a deep breath and said:

"I, also, have a letter of indulgence in my cupboard, which declares me free from the penalties of purgatory for a thousand years. But it does not bring me any comfort. Probably Dr. Luther, whom our priest always called the archheretic, is not so far wrong in his fierce war upon indulgence. And this precious doctrine of Christ's blood and wounds as the only ransom for our sins,—why, Master, if that were true we should be entirely free, and could look forward to death with tranquillity. In that case we should not need to rack our brains whether we have told all our sins and whether our contrition is perfect. Oh! that I might once read what this man Luther has written! My father recently thought that Luther could hardly be as bad as the priests made him out; otherwise Frederick the Wise, the uncle of our duke, would not have saved him till now from a heretic's death."

These and many other things they talked about in connection with that which is the marrow of the Gospel and its central light. What to the reason of the natural man is merely a deceptive mirage, that, by the Spirit of God, continued to sink even deeper into

the heart of the maid, and brought peace to her aroused conscience.

Finally her thoughts came back again to the things of this life. A slight blush spread over her lovely features when, with averted face, she asked the master:

"Were you yourself in the tavern on that evening?"

"Not I, but my Hinnark."

"And did he see the bout of the knights?"

"Yes, indeed."

"Was Younker Hans von Hasselbach really as unchivalrous as they say; he is usually opposed to this wild drinking?"

Only with an effort and with a deep blush was she able to bring forth these words. Master Smid, however, said in astonishment:

"The young gentleman was the only one sober in the whole company, and the strife grew out of the defense of the girl."

"Which girl?" asked the maid surprised.

It was now the turn of the tailor to be embarrassed. He perceived that Miss Elsa knew nothing at all as yet about the fight. He realized, however, that she did not know that Kurt von Uhlenhorst was desired as son-in-law, and therefore he was afraid to reveal his bad deeds. But when he hesitated with the answer, the young woman, with tears in her eyes, said:

"Master, probably my fate depends upon this matter. You are the only one whom I can ask; tell me the full truth, even if it should break my heart. I must have certainty. Tell me: did Hans von Hasselbach subject me to a deadly insult? Did he compare me to a shameless barmaid?"

The wise master now saw how the matter stood; he could not resist any longer the pleadings of his dear young lady, come what might. Therefore he narrated to her the whole course of events. The joy which he saw arising in the sparkling eyes and on the

burning cheeks of the maiden rewarded him richly, for all the fear and anxiety which arose within him.

On taking her leave she thanked him heartily for all his good words. He, in turn, ventured to make a request of her.

"It would be well if our godchild could be gotten away from the tavern; she is a good girl, who generally can take care of herself. But life in the tavern is rather rough. Could you not take her as your servant into your castle? I should know her well cared for there, and your uncle would scarcely deny your request."

"I will gladly do that," said the girl, "as soon as it can be arranged. It might cause too much commotion to do it at once; but it can be done in the summer."

A few weeks after New-year's Herr von Hohenkamp came to Uhlenhorst. He was a large man of good appearance, but the easy life, which at that time was in vogue in most cloisters, gave him a wide girth in spite of the fact that he was only forty years old. The report was current at that time that monks and nuns lived in Lent better than ordinary people on festival days. The fasting and seclusion characteristic of the unnatural, unbiblical life in the cloister had long since given place to the exact opposite.

Even the mendicant orders, contrary to the design of their founders, had amassed wealth, and held it under various pretexts. The old Benedictines were long since reputed as wealthy and given to a sumptuous life. The aristocratic Benedictine cloister in Luneburg was rich above all others. Even after the introduction of the Reformation, Count Ernest the Confessor had much trouble to move Abbott Baldwin to pay his proper share toward state expenses. The council of the free city, paying no attention to the ruler, confirmed the monks in their resistance. The abbott did not permit his own monks to pay anything. He was the first member of the Luneburg Legislature, and the monks were gentlemen held in great honor.

Nothwithstanding, Brother Benedict, according to report, could not go to Uhlenhorst too quickly. He surmised that his former parishioner, the beautiful Madam von Uhlenhorst, had something to do with the matter. The discipline of the cloister, moreover, was not agreeable to him, lax though it was. It was his purpose to make full use of his newly gained freedom.

His reception at Uhlenhorst was up to his expectations. The farmers were proud of their priest of noble family. Even Smid, the serious tailor, again went to confession. In the castle he had soon bewitched the old gentleman as well as Knight Ulrich, so that he enjoyed a standing invitation to supper. That the short way might not be too difficult for him, Herr Hans even presented him a beautiful horse, which the priest presently used for the chase. Also Younker Kurt, who continued to extend his visit, seemed fascinated by this fine gentleman, who, in fact, was entirely up to his standard—or down, according to the point of view. However, he did not fail to observe his conduct toward Madam von Uhlenhorst. Apparently it was beyond reproach. With not a single word did the two betray that formerly they stood in closer relation to each other. But the sharp eyes of the younker, in spite of this, noticed many things. The vain woman adorned herself, if possible, even more than before. She manifested evident affectation in the presence of the priest and drank more at the table than was her custom.

To rid herself of the deadly ennui, Madam von Uhlenhorst was in the habit of playing the noble game of chess, with which she was acquainted from childhood. It fitted in very well that the new priest was an expert player. He beat the men one after another. Then the master of Uhlenhorst said, laughing:

"Only my wife remains yet to be defeated; but it will not be so easy in her case; she is the best player among us."

She really was his match as a player; but now

that, for the first time she sat opposite to this man, her excitement was so great that she made gross mistakes. Being a man well acquainted with the ways of the world, he was entirely self-possessed and could easily have beaten her, had he wished. But purposely he made so many mistakes that she won, notwithstanding her many blunders in the beginning. This caused the old Herr von Uhlenhorst to burst into loud laughter, while Younker Kurt smiled a peculiar smile.

Only with the young noblewoman could Brother Benedict not get on at all. She met him with such shyness and reserve that he considered her somewhat simple, although he was impressed with her beauty. Elsa had no fault to find with being kept purposely by her mother out of the presence of this new guest. She was merely confirmed in her antipathy by his appearance, and was not able, in spite of all the scolding of her mother, to confess to the priest. However, she had no inkling of the real relation between her mother and this man.

CHAPTER IV.

Hans and Hinnark.

ONE day in the beginning of February, Hans von Hasselbach rode up to the smithy of Uhlenhorst to have his horse shod. Instead of going to the tavern across the way, as was his custom, he went into the smithy with Hinnark. Inasmuch as the master was just then in the tavern to refresh himself, he drew the workman into a conversation.

"Hinnark," said he, "you should go with me; your courage and your strength are more fitting for a warrior than for a smith."

With open mouth Hinnark stared at the younker; but the light he saw suddenly gleaming in Hinnark's eyes convinced the latter that his proposal had aroused a storm in the heart of the youth.

"The peasants in the southern part of Germany are reported to have become savage, and a messenger from the duke announces that all the tenants are holding themselves in readiness to ride southward in the spring. I should like very much to take a man like yourself with me as servant."

With these words an entirely new world opened to the eyes of the youth, and it was loud in its call.

"Father and mother would not permit it," he finally said.

"But you would have the desire, eh? In the end we might enter the imperial service and, like my father, ride to Italy. That certainly must be a life in distant Italy; my father never tired of telling about it."

"Well, I will talk to my father about it," rejoined Hinnark and started to work.

"Is Younker Kurt still at Uhlenhorst?"

"Yes, and he is not likely to go away very soon."

"Why do you think so?"

"It is reported that he is openly seeking the hand of Miss Elsa, and that the parents favor the suit."

"And Miss Elsa?" inquired Younker Hans, excited.

"She does not show herself at all, as the servants say. She does not seem to favor Younker Kurt."

"Younker Ulrich sent me word that if I came to Uhlenhorst again, they would set the dogs on me. But I must go there once more, before I ride south. Will you bring me the news when both the younkers are absent? My sponsor will not drive me away, I am sure of that."

"Most readily I will inform you; but it is likely that I shall have to come at night, in order to attract no attention."

"Then consider what I have said to you about becoming a soldier. I believe you would in this way make your fortune."

As Hinnark expected, his parents did not wish to hear anything of the proposal made by the knight.

The mother indeed wept when she noticed that the head of her son was filled with thoughts of the free soldier life which Younker Hans had portrayed to him.

"A trade is best for you, Hinnark. That you will soon go abroad is in order, and I am satisfied that you should travel, because I can then hope to hear more of the new doctrine; but stay away from the bloody trade of war."

Several days later Hinnark noticed the two younkers riding away, and learned in the tavern that they had gone to the estate of Kurt for several days to enjoy the chase. On the same evening he absented himself and wandered in the moonlight night to Hasselbach, about four miles away. The long walk through forest and heath aroused in him anew the desire to get out into the world. The life of war, which would take him as far as Italy, appeared to him in the rosiest light. True, filial obedience warred against this desire, but it paled more and more. If he were to go southward into the peasant war, he would have the best opportunity to bring his father information about the new doctrine, for which he had so great a desire. His longing for adventure burned brighter, and the resolution matured within him that, if necessary, he would run away with Younker Hans to enter the army.

Castle Hasselbach was little more than a large farm-house. On two sides it was surrounded by a mill-pond which was formed by a dam across the Hassel, the brook which furnished the water for the castle moat. The knight owned only a few hundred

acres. In addition he had a small income from the mill, in which his tenant lived. Many a bushel of rye and buckwheat had been wheeled hither by Hinnark as a boy, so that he knew the ins and outs. This time he straightway passed the mill and went direct to the castle, which did not even have the draw-bridge raised. Hans had no feuds with his neighbors. At any rate, he could scarcely have defended himself with his few old servants.

In the room of the knight the light still burned; he was poring over one of the books of his father, which had been written by a so-called humanist. It hurled at the monks and priests the shafts of sarcasm; in fact, it ridiculed even many doctrines of the church.

"That almost robs a man of his faith," murmured Younker Hans, holding his head meditatively in his hand. "What is here said of the priests is certainly true in a large measure; my father always called them 'lazy-bellies'; that they persecuted those who thought otherwise and murdered them, and that they still persecute them, is shown by the example of poor Henry von Zuetpfen. According to this book, the old heathen appear to have been better people than the Christians of today. My father also stated that it was an open secret in Italy that Pope Leo X. was merely a cultured heathen, who considered the divinity of Christ a fable. He was also able to tell of the vile doings of Alexander VI. and of Julius II. If the head is in this condition, in what shape may the members be?"

The barking of dogs and the continuous pounding on the portal aroused him from his reverie. He sprang to the window and shouted:

"Hinnark, is that you?"

Receiving an affirmative answer, he hastened out. His reverie had disappeared, and the joy of youth and of love throbbed in his veins.

"Are they really gone, Hinnark?"

"Today they went for several days to enjoy the chase at the castle of Younker Kurt."

"Then I will ride to Uhlenhorst tomorrow. At least I will try my luck. But take a little rest; my old Karstens will certainly be able to find a bottle of wine in the cellar, even if Hasselbach cannot boast a large assortment of that refreshment. I must get out into the world and make my fortune with my sword. But how is it about your riding along? Will your parents consent?"

"I am sorry to say, no."

"You say, sorry. Well, if you have the desire, the matter will be adjusted. Probably I myself shall sometime speak to your father."

While Hinnark was gazing intensely upon the weapons on the wall, the knight said:

"Just hunt out a sword for yourself at once! My father left me quite a number of these, and you can test the steel yourself."

That was just what Hinnark was looking for. He did nothing with greater joy in the smithy than to forge and to sharpen weapons. He tested a number of swords; the longest and the heaviest pleased him best.

"You have a good eye," laughingly said the knight. "My grandfather, a very strong man, used that one a long time. It was rather too heavy for my father, and also for me, until now. Try to whirl it around your head." The youth did it with zest and for his strong muscles it was not too heavy. The knight, however, laughed at his awkward way in swinging the weapon, seized it himself and said:

"The blow must hum, or it will do no good." With this he swung the weapon around his head again and again, until a humming note became audible. Hinnark watched him in astonishment and tried his own luck immediately once more.

"You will certainly become a good warrior under my direction. Now, however, let us try the wine,

which my old Karstens had really succeeded in finding, although he has put me off long since with beer."

When Hinnark again stepped out into the cold winter night, his head burned from the unaccustomed wine and, even more, from the desire to become a soldier. The flush of the wine passed away by and by, and he experienced a physical reaction; but the desire to be a soldier remained and pursued him even in his dreams.

"There Younker von Havenothing comes riding to the castle," so Madam von Uhlenhorst exclaimed in her anger on the next afternoon. "The sneak merely waited until our younkers rode away; but I can set the dogs on him as well as my son, if it becomes necessary."

"Well, don't talk any nonsense," said her husband in a soothing voice. "Hans is my godchild and a fine fellow; just allow him to come into the house."

"A fine fellow, who compared our Elsa with a shameless barmaid," shrieked Madam Brigitta.

"That is base slander!" Miss Elsa ventured to retort. "He merely defended the poor girl against Younker Kurt, and asked my brother on that occasion whether he would permit me to be treated so."

"Ah, I thought so," said the father; but his wife yelled at her daughter:

"Whence do you know that? You are no doubt associating with the brazen fellow behind our backs? A stop shall be put to that."

With this she seized the arm of her daughter, forcibly dragged her to her room, and locked her in. Her husband was about to leap to his feet, but the priest laid his hand soothingly upon his arm, and said with unction:

"Let her alone, it would be a misfortune for your family, if this poor duffer would win the heart of the maid. She cannot have him anyhow. Let maternal discipline do here what is best."

Younker Hans had just stepped into the hall, when Madam von Uhlenhorst came storming in, and

shouted to him, with hands stretched out as if to drive him back:

"There is the door, Mr. Younker! Well have you spied out the absence of our young gentlemen; but we are brave enough to preserve the rights of our house. Whoever compares our daughter to a barmaid shall be driven from our castle with dogs if he does not go willingly."

"A knight does not intrude where he is not wanted," said the priest.

"No monk needs to tell me that," Younker Hans answered him in anger.

"Whoever says that I insulted Miss Elsa, who is dearer to me than my life, is a liar, and if he be a knight, I challenge him to a duel with swords. Godfather, are you of the same opinion as your wife?"

"No, Hans, I consider you a real gentleman, but, as matters now stand, it will no doubt be better if you avoid our house for a season."

"Then farewell, Herr von Uhlenhorst."

With these words the knight went out, his spurs ringing. Nor did he look around until he arrived at the gate. Then suddenly he turned his horse and looked up to Elsa's window. A happy smile chased away the dark anger from his features when he beheld the object of his love, as she waved him an adieu with her kerchief. Lifting his plumed helmet and bowing his head down to the saddle, he joyfully rode away.

"No moat so deep, no wall so steep;
When lovers will meet, they'll risk the leap."

This ditty passed through his mind, while his beloved pressed her kerchief to her eyes and wept bitterly.

Quite composed, Younker Hans rode in the meantime to the smithy, directed Hinnark to examine the left forefoot of his horse, which was not affected at all, and whispered into his ear:

"Hinnark, can you take a note to the castle for me, without having anybody but Miss Elsa know it?"

"My father might attend to it; for he is still sewing up there, and Miss Elsa often comes to him into the tailor shop. She did not believe from the very first that you had insulted her; at her request father told her the whole truth. But my father is very strict about the fourth commandment. It will be a matter of conscience with him to deal with the daughter without the knowledge of the parents. But I will take care of the note, even if I cannot get to the young noblewoman myself without attracting notice. Dortie over there will pass through the fire for you, since you have defended her so bravely. She often goes to the castle with the servant girls; having a wise head, she will gladly carry out the commission."

"Very well, tomorrow I will bring the letter. So there is nothing wrong with the horse?" he continued aloud as he saw Mr. Ehlers appear in the door. Thereupon he trotted away.

The next morning, when he stepped into the tavern, he recognized by Dortie's laughing eyes that she was ready. In serving him the drink she hastily whispered to him:

"Tomorrow is Sunday; then my cousin will help serving drinks, and in the afternoon I can easily slip into the castle."

Stealthily he slipped the letter into her hand, at the same time pressing a messenger fee into her palm. He parted from her with the words:

"Bring me good news, I shall wait for you here."

The next morning Dortie passed the young noblewoman at the church gate without attracting attention. Courteously bowing to her, she whispered:

"I have something for you," with that she hastened on, for in the presence of many observers she did not venture to give her the note. The young lady of the castle blushed; for she surmised what was coming. She arose from dinner as soon as possible, being too excited to eat, and looked down the road to the village. She did not need to wait long; for she

soon recognized Dortie by her slender stature and swift walk. She at once went to the gate to meet her, knowing that her parents were taking their noonday nap and that the girls were busy in the kitchen. In the shadow of the gate Dortie drew the letter out of her waist and handed it to Elsa with the words:

"Younker Hans is waiting down below for the answer."

With this she quickly went into the servants' room, while Miss Elsa, with a throbbing heart, hastened to her room.

With trembling fingers she opened the letter, which contained only these few lines:

'I cannot go abroad for some years without taking leave of you. If you can extend your afternoon ride to the large linden tree in the south, I can meet you. When may I expect you?"

"Today yet, today yet," said the maiden to herself.

"Even if I can never be his own, he shall not go away without taking leave of me. Rather than take the wretched Kurt, I will go into the convent."

She hid the letter deep in her drawer. A moment she stood there, absorbed in reflection. Then she stretched her hand toward a golden locket, which hung on a chain about her neck, and hid it safely under her riding-mantle. Thereupon she went down into the servants' quarters and ordered her horse. When she passed out of the gate, Dortie was there, who had left the other girls under a pretext.

"Tell the knight that in a half hour I shall expect him at the large linden tree."

With these words she trotted away, making a large détour around the village.

Dortie hastened home, and a short time afterward Younger Hans rode toward the South.

He was so eager that he rode very fast and arrived under the linden tree first. Quite soon, however, the young noblewoman approached from the other side. He leaped out of the saddle and helped her to

dismount. Presently the two young people stood face to face. Their hearts were too full for utterance for a while; but at last the knight's manhood asserted itself, and he made straightway for the castle which he desired to storm.

"Miss Elsa, I am going to ride to war, but my heart will remain at home; will you keep it for me until I return?"

With that he took her hand and pleadingly looked at her with his large bright eyes. Hesitatingly she yielded her hand, her face glowing to the roots of her hair; but, overwhelmed by her feelings, she found no answer.

"Speak, dearest, will you? I have almost lost my faith in God; do not permit me to lose my faith also in you."

Then finally the sweet secret came over her lips:

"I would like to keep your heart, but I must bury it in the deepest chest; for my parents are not favorable to your suit."

"Then you are mine," he exulted, drawing her into his arms.

"Your true eyes have not deceived me. Even if everything is against us today, we are young, and many a poor knight has made his fortune in war. Should I some day return home as imperial standard bearer, with plenty of booty in my pocket, even your father will not look at me askance any longer. Your brother is not a bad man, but Kurt has ruined him. His own estate is already heavily indebted, and now he is seeking your inheritance."

"I will enter the convent rather than belong to this ruffian."

"That is what I wanted to hear; but you shall not enter the convent, either. I have a charm here which will save you from it."

With that he drew forth a golden band and said:

"This is the engagement ring of my sainted mother, which my father gave me on his death-bed. Preserve it until the day when you can wear it."

She permitted the ring to be placed upon her finger. The next moment, however, she hid it in her bosom. In exchange for the ring she drew forth an ornament which her father had presented to her at her last birthday. It contained her own picture, painted very skilfully by an artist in Luneburg. Younker Hans shouted for joy at the sight of it, hid it over his heart, and said:

"It shall rest there as long as I am alive."

Subsequently they spoke of many things in their youthful joy, overshadowed as it was by dark clouds. The maid was especially disquieted at the thought of the long absence of her lover and the war into which he was to plunge. Then another thought troubled her, which she finally expressed.

"A moment ago, dearest, you spoke a very sinister word: 'I have almost lost faith in God.' You certainly do not mean that seriously?'

The knight was now very sorry for his unpremeditated expression; for he could tell by the expression of her face that he had given her pain. Being a truthful man, he could not flatly deny the imputation. Therefore he said:

"Can you sanction everything that the servants of the church say and do? I could not any longer go to confession to our priest, who was continually drunk. Much less can I confess to Herr von Hohenkamp, who seems to be the bosom friend of Kurt. Of the gay life of the monks and nuns I have heard so much in Luneburg that all kinds of doubts have arisen within me."

"If it is only that," said the maiden, breathing more freely, "I will not be concerned about it. I suffer from similar doubts, and could never be sure of my salvation in spite of an earnest effort to do so; for who can do full penance for all his sins? But recently a word was spoken to me by the old pious tailor Smid which has filled my soul with hope. It is reported to be the new doctrine which Dr. Luther preaches, and which caused Henry von Zuetpfen to

go to the stake. It simply states that we must no longer depend for our salvation upon our own merits, but upon the sufferings and death of Christ. The old tailor himself can not yet believe it. According to him, it makes the road to heaven too easy and too safe, and it certainly is not the doctrine of the church. But I drank it down as a thirsty person does water, and I verily believe that one could go into death for such a precious doctrine."

Profundly moved, he gazed at his betrothed, whose last words were spoken with considerable ardor, and said in a tone of regretful longing: "Oh, that I, too, might be able to believe that!"

"You are about to travel southward; hunt up Luther himself. He will show you the right way. As little as I know about him, so great is my confidence in the man who through a few words has succeeded in taking a great burden from my soul. He is said even to have translated the Scriptures into German, as the new priest recently said. Of course, he thinks that this act alone merits the stake; for out of the Holy Scriptures, the priest contends, the peasants have drawn justification for their insurrection. But it is impossible for me to believe that the Word of God has such an effect. Hans, the finest present that you could bring from abroad is the Word of God in the German language."

"I will gladly do that, if it is possible. But you had better keep your new faith to yourself for the present; for I do not trust Brother Benedict. Even such a gay priest might become an executioner of heretics if his authority is threatened."

The maiden became embarrassed, for in her the saying had already been fulfilled, "I believe, therefore I speak." At first she had confided her great secret to the old cook, then to all the servants; and it was received by all with avidity; for, in just that way, the glad tidings of Christ, the only Savior, passed through the German land in those days, as if the angels themselves had been the messengers.

"We must part," finally said the maid, alarmed by the signs of dusk from the westering sun. "I shall be missed, or my brother and Kurt may return."

At parting tears were shed. Even Younker Hans' eyes became moist at the thought of the uncertain future. After both had mounted, he took his dagger and, high up in the linden tree, he carved the letters "E" and "H".

"Look at these when you become lonesome and heavy-hearted," he said; "deeper than into this linden tree your name is written into my heart."

A clasping of hands, an affectionate farewell; then the maid turned her steed and galloped toward the castle. Younker Hans looked after her as long as her slender form was visible under the pine; then he, too, rode away, and was presently alone in his silent castle.

It was on a mild March evening, just when the last guests were leaving the inn. The old landlord was going to his chamber and Dortie was about to lock the door, when two travelers rode up to the tavern. The one dismounted and demanded two glasses of beer. Quietly he sat down at the table, laid his money on it, and said to the girl:

"My companion is an old gentleman, whose limbs are far from nimble. Since we shall not tarry long, he does not wish to dismount at all. Carry his glass out to him, while I shall regale myself with another."

Dortie did not know the man; however, as this happened often, and she was a girl of courage, she took the money and went out, unsuspecting, with the refreshment. The other rider seemed to be an old, sickly man. He had drawn up the collar of his mantle; his hat was drawn deep over his face, and he sat the horse in a crouching posture. With trembling hand, which Dortie could notice quite well in the moonlight, he lifted the bumper to his mouth and drank very slowly. But at the moment when he handed the drinking-vessel back to her, he suddenly grasped both her hands, while his companion, who had

crept behind unobserved, took hold of her from the rear and attempted to force a gag into her mouth. One short cry of fear came from her mouth, then the gag was pushed in, so that she could scarcely breathe. However, Dortie was a strong girl. With strength born of desperation she wrenched her hand from the rider and jerked him from the horse. At the same moment the other fellow seized her hands and tied them together with a rope. Now she was helpless. Apparently beyond human help, she cried to God for help, for men could no longer hear her. Nevertheless, it took the bandits several moments to lift her upon the horse. These few moments, however, were sufficient for the rescue. The old tavern-keeper had, indeed, heard the cry, but in his half-intoxicated condition he thought that Dortie had been scared a little on the outside. Hinnark, as usual, had not spent the evening at home. He had returned late and was just in the act of going to bed when he heard the two riders approach. Desirous to know who was coming so late, he opened the dormer window and looked out. Since only one rider went into the tavern, and Dortie soon came out with a bumper for the other, the matter looked suspicious to him, and hastily he went down the stairs. He was half way down when he heard the piercing scream of the girl. Leaping down the steps with two strides, he grabbed a heavy hammer from the anvil and rushed out. The second rider was just vaulting into the saddle, while the first one, who was holding the girl before him, had already turned his animal and begun to move. Just then Hinnark was on the spot. He could not hope to overtake the rider on foot, who had dug his spurs deep into the flanks of his horse. Therefore, with all his might he threw the heavy hammer after him and hit him on the shoulder with such force that he fell from the horse. When Dortie became aware of this, she slid down to the earth, which she could do without trouble, since the well trained horse had stopped at the fall of the rider.

The kidnapper uttered just one terrible oath, and then he was quiet. But his companion, with a mad yell, pounced upon the deliverer with drawn sword, so that he had just time to jump back into the smithy and close the door.

"Rascal! I will pay you back for that," he roared. "Not another week shall you live!"

Hinnark recognized the voice. It belonged to no other than the servant of Younker Kurt von Uhlenhorst, just as he had surmised. This Caspar was a man forty years of age, fearless in combat, but an out-and-out knave, of whom it was reported that he had already killed several people. While Hinnark realized his danger perfectly, he looked for an iron rod nevertheless. Having found one, he went before the door. If Dortie were still in trouble he would surely brave the sword of a soldier.

He was astonished to observe Caspar quietly helping his master to mount, while Dortie was nowhere to be seen.

"Let them ride away, the bandits!" he thought. "I can do nothing against two swords."

Then he went over to the tavern, but he could nowhere get sight of the girl, who, by that time, had slipped into the house. Softly he rapped at the door and spoke her name. She opened it, and, unable to speak, extended her bound hands toward him. He first seized the dreadful gag in her mouth, and then unbound her hands. Sobbing, the girl sank upon his breast.

"You have saved me, Hinnark! How can I ever reward you for that?" she sobbed.

The young man drew her gently forth from the open door and said in a low voice:

"By remaining true to me, even if I go abroad for years."

"Then you really want to go away; but do not go now as long as this younker is still here. He is soon going to war, then I shall have rest."

"Did you really recognize Kurt; how could you go out to him?"

"Caspar has cut his long beard off, which has so changed his appearance that I did not recognize him, and his master cut such a miserable figure on the horse that I took him for an old, sick man, unable to dismount."

"I recognized Caspar by his voice when he threatened to kill me. Whether I seriously injured the Uhlenhorst fellow or not, certain it is that they will seek revenge. Caspar is reported to have committed secret murders; therefore my resolution stands, and this night yet I will go to Hasselbach."

"Without having the consent of your parents?" asked the girl frightened.

"We spoke about it all evening. They are not opposed to my going abroad: but they do not want me to enter the army. Tomorrow Younker Hans will go to Duke Otto; just yesterday he urged me very much to go with him. I can never get a better master, and I have a greater desire for the sword than for the hammer. You go to my parents and tell them all. Ask them to forgive me all the pains which I have caused them. I believe that my act is for the best. As a soldier, I shall be able to defend myself against both these scoundrels, even should they join the army. Younker Hans will soon surpass Younker Kurt in the knowledge of the sword, while I shall receive the large sword of his father."

"But what will become of me when you are gone? My uncle thinks only of his income, but I am sick of the tavern."

"That is attended to. Father recently asked Miss Elsa to take you to the castle, and she has promised to do it."

"Oh, what relief!" shouted the girl in glad tone, forgetting all her deadly fright at the happy thought. "Then I shall have just as good a mistress as you will have a master. In that case the rascal shall certainly not get the young noblewoman. I will tell

her enough about Younker Kurt. She must wait for your master as I shall wait for you."

"That's right, Dortie, keep a stiff upper lip! The world is so beautiful and large that I certainly shall make my fortune. After a few years I shall come home and we shall build our nest. With this my parents are certainly agreed. I know that. Only take care that father does not meditate too much upon church matters, or even get into conflict with the black-coats; that is dangerous today. I will inquire in the realm about Luther and his doctrine, and shall finally bring father word."

When, at last, the departure drew near, even the heart of Hinnark became heavy. Presently he said:

"Wait a moment, I will get you a little keepsake."

Quickly he returned with a richly ornamented dagger, which he himself had made. As he drew it from the leather sheath, the steel glistened in the moonlight. He said:

"If you ever get into trouble again, as you did a while ago, just use this steel. I hope it will serve you as well as my hammer just served me."

"But what shall I give you for a keepsake?" said Dortie. "My uncle is so stingy that I have nothing but my clothes, not a ring or a chain."

Then the lad drew out the dagger and cut off one of the beautiful locks of the girl, which had become separated from her braids.

"That is a more acceptable keepsake for me than a golden ring; that is part of yourself."

With these words he hid the lock of hair in his bosom. Then he went back into the smithy, tied up his little bundle and took leave of his home and his betrothed. Dortie looked after him as long as she could; then she returned to the house in tears.

CHAPTER V.

In the Peasant War.

OF the many historical lies which the enemeis of the Reformation have told about this great act of God, none has more widely spread than the report that the work of Luther brought on the dreadful Peasant War. It needs but to be pointed out that in all surrounding lands, long before Luther's time, even worse peasant wars had taken place. That ought to be sufficient to refute the lie. The German peasants used the freedom of the Gospel as an excuse to promote their demands for temporal advantages. This was but natural, like things having been done long before. Already the French "Pastorels" of 1251 and 1320 had given their plundering of the cloisters and the Jews a religious cloak. No more than the English Reformer Wickliffe with responsibility for the insurrection in 1381, can Luther be charged with responsibility for the Peasant War. That his doctrine of the freedom of the Christian was misapplied by the poor peasants who were severely maltreated by their masters, is true; but the uprising would have come in any event, and probably accompanied by even greater excesses.

The "Jaquerie," which devastated France about 1358, had no religious aspect whatever; yet it was the worst peasant insurrection since the time of the frightful "Circumcellions" in northern Africa at the time of the Romans. The "Jaquerie" simply fought from a desire for revenge, endeavoring to pay shame for shame and torture for torture; while the German peasants, at first, made very moderate, reasonable demands upon their masters. Had these accepted the urgent advice of Luther and treated their subjects justly, even in a measure, it would have been infinitely better for the realm.

In Hungary, just a few years before, a dreadful peasant war was crushed by force. When finally the leader, a veritable giant, was captured, his followers, crazed with hunger, were coerced to gnaw the flesh from the bones of the living man. Nor was Luther's voice of warning and admonition heeded in Germany. The lords thought only of the forcible suppression of the evil, by which the peasants were merely emboldened to perpetrate unmentionable cruelties. At that juncture Luther could keep silent no longer; for the worst government is still better than anarchy. In the summer of 1534 he went personally to Thuringia for the purpose of quieting the people who had been aroused by the author of the disturbance, Karlstadt. But the radicalism of Karlstadt pleased the inhabitants of Orlamuenden better than the sober, scriptural doctrine of Luther. "Here God dwells, and the Holy Ghost with all his feathers and eggs," the Reformer remarked sarcastically. When the people of Orlamuenden, who already before had written him a gruff letter, surrounded him as if they would devour him, and hurled at him their maledictions, he was obliged to flee the city. Worse than even Kalstadt, Thomas Muenzer, a popular orator, thundered against "the lazy flesh of Wittenberg." He did not hesitate to preach insurrection against all government. When marching in a procession, he had a red cross and a bare sword carried before him. After repeated uprisings and considerable smashing of images he succeeded, in March 1525, in the overthrow of the old council of Muehlhausen and its supersession by what he called the kingdom of God upon earth, a communistic commonwealth composed largely of paupers and adventurers. This had already been the aim of the Taborites; among the Anabaptists of Munster it was to become a ghastly reality.

Muenzer's favorite theme was the battle of the Lord and the extermination of all the wicked. In his famous writing to the Mansfield miners he counseled: "Do not exercise mercy, even though Esau speak

kindly words. Do not consider the sufferings of the wicked; they will entreat you in a very winning way, weep, and plead like children! Do not exercise mercy, but bear in mind the command of God to the Israelites through Moses. The same command has been revealed to us. Forward! Forward while the fire is hot! Do not permit your sword to be cooled by blood; strike the anvil of Nimrod, overthrow his power! God goes before you; follow!" The self-appointed prophet who, by the cruel treatment of his parents, had been embittered against all masters from his youth, dreamed of playing a role like that of Moses or Gideon. He liked to review his armed brethren, and, out on the field, to preach from the saddle. Determination written upon his face, his bearded followers surrounded him. On the 26th of April they marched out, carrying in their midst a banner which showed a rainbow upon a white field. When things came to such a pass in the German lands, in spite of all sympathy which Luther, himself a peasant's son, had with the poor, suppressed peasants, it was not possible for him to do otherwise than to summon the princes and lords to battle. "The mad peasants should be killed like mad dogs," he wrote, and the lords followed his powerful voice with unusual unanimity.

In the Luneburg country things looked bad at this time, likewise. All the woes of the old German empire had revealed themselves a few years before in the so-called Canonic Feud. Duke Henry the Intermediate, of Brunswick-Luneburg, was both personally and politically hostile to his cousins Eric von Calenberg and Henry the Lesser of Brunswick-Wolfenbuettel. The two latter held faithfully to the house of Austria; Henry the Intermediate however, bribed with French coin, and also influenced by his son-in-law, Charles of Guelders, tried to have Francis I. elected as German emperor. The brother of Henry the Lesser, the bishop of Minden, sided with the former, while Bishop John of Hildesheim, moved by intense hatred for Henry the Lesser, supported Henry

the Intermediate. With the help of Guelders knights the latter gained a victory at Soltau, June 28, 1519.

The victory not having the expected results, the matter was to be decided at Worms. Still Henry the Lesser, who justly feared the imperial faction, went to France, where his son, Ernest, had been serving for several years, which led to his deposal. Through the intervention of his brothers-in-law, the rulers of Saxony, an armistice was declared in October, 1521, providing for a surrender of prisoners by both parties, and the restoration of Castle Woelpe to Duke Eric by the Duke of Luneburg, while Eric and Henry were to apply themselves to winning the good will of the emperor for the land of Luneburg.

The Canonic Feud had worked great destruction in the land of Luneburg; for scorching and burning belonged to war at that time as well as murder. In addition Henry the Intermediate had loaded an almost unbearable debt upon the land through his extravagance, the payment of which kept his capable son, Duke Ernest the Confessor, busy all his life. He was merely the younger brother; but Count Otto, a chivalrous gentleman, much rather preferred to be in battle and war than in his office, and permitted his wise brother Ernest to bear all the burdens of government, much to the welfare of the land. Naturally, Count Otto led the two hundred and fifty horse which this government contributed to the Peasant War.

As one of the last of these horsemen, Younker Kurt von Uhlenhorst made his appearance in Celle. He carried his arm in a sling, the result of an accident suffered in the chase, according to his explanation.

"You must have struck him a mighty blow, Hinnark," laughingly said Younker Hans to his squire: "he still looks very pale. Caspar is without his long beard; I should scarcely have recognized him. They act as if they did not see us; the more, however, will they observe us in secret. Both look fierce enough to pierce the poor peasants with their eyes. I only fear

that they would rather pierce you and me than those peasants."

"Just let them come on!" said Hinnark, proud of his dignity as a squire of the Younker von Hasselbach, "with the sword I can serve them better than with the hammer."

"Nevertheless take care, especially at night; a stealthy thrust will kill just as quickly as one dealt in open battle."

"I shall certainly be on my guard. If they drink as much every evening as Younker Ulrich did yesterday, there is little to fear from them. Only see how weakly he sits on the saddle this morning."

"Kurt was responsible for his downfall; I should like to warn him, but he will no longer take a warning from me. His cousin, who expects to become his brother-in-law, is now everything to him. He will learn to know the rascal sometime; but, most likely, when it is too late. Whoever can assault a girl is capable of any villany."

It was on the twenty-eighth of April when five thousand peasants marched into Erfurt, after the council had purchased the safety of the citizens and their property by surrendering the churches and holy places. The "deliverance of the whole world," as Schoesser of Alstedt wrote, appeared to be immanent. Muenzer wrote to the Catholic Count Ernest of Mansfield on the twelfth of May: "Look, you maggot-eaten wretch! Who made you to be the prince of the people that God has purchased with his precious blood?" On the same day they demanded an answer; in default thereof, in the name of the Lord of Hosts, they would visit their wrath upon him. "I, Thomas Muenzer," was the proclamation, "am passing along, with the sword of Gideon. All Germany, France and Italy are aroused."

Had the peasant insurrection really had a great leader, able to consolidate the widely scattered peasant army, probably the whole German aristocracy, princes and lesser nobles, would have been compelled to come

to terms; but also the lords and princes lacked harmony. For instance, besides lesser lords and convents, the archbishop of Mayence, the bishop of Spires, the dioceses of Franconia, the Teutonic Order of Mergenheim, Elector Louis of the Palatinate, and Margrave Philip of Baden had gone the way of compromise.

Their greatest hope the insurrectionists had set upon the mild Frederick the Wise, who always did consider severity against the poor as the sign of a bad character. Even in this wild tempest he maintained his self-possession and said: "If God so wills it, the end shall be that the common people shall rule. But if it is not His divine will, and His honor requires the opposite course, things shall soon change." A few days before the decisive battle, he died in peace. He begged forgiveness of his servants in the words: "We princes lay many burdens upon the poor people and do such things as are not right." Then he took the holy communion, receiving both elements, whereby he openly joined the Reformation, which he had so long protected. Thus he entered into the joys of his Lord.

Luther is even today sneered at as the "servant of princes," because he was swayed by the word of God: "Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake." Other denominations have inscribed upon their banners the right of revolution against tyrants; however, the church which at first bore Luther's name as a mark of derision, but now bears it as a mark of honor, also in this respect walks in his footsteps. If the apostle, filled with the Spirit of God, could enjoin obedience even upon Roman slaves, it is in force also in our time, for God's Word abides forever. Already in his "Exhortation to Peace," based upon the "Twelve Articles of the Swabian Peasantry," Luther, with irrefutable clearness, explained that neither the peasants nor the lords were true Christians and that neither of the two parties was altogether in the right. Above all, Luther tried to convince the peasants that their acts of violence were in direct

contradiction to the Gospel which they confessed. "I say, you must allow the Christian name to stand, and not to make it a cloak for your impatient, warlike, unchristian purpose. That name I begrudge you; you shall not bear it."

The peasants, deceived by fanatics like Muenzer, would not listen to the voice of exhortation. And now the time had come when they were to suffer. On the twelfth of May, George Truchsess, the tried leader of the Swabian Federation, after a hard battle, struck the peasants of Württemberg a stunning blow between Boeblingen and Sindelfingen. The city of Weinsberg, which the peasants had taken on Easter Sunday with frightful loss of blood and most inhuman cruelties, was burned to the ground together with all the property and cattle it contained, and likewise five villages in the vicinity. Some of the chief participants in this massacre were chained to trees and slowly roasted.

In Thuringia, Landgrave Phillip of Hesse, George of Saxony, Henry of Saxony, Albrecht of Mansfield, and Otto of Brunswick-Luneburg led a small but well equipped army against Muenzer's eight thousand peasants. It was on the fifteenth of May, 1525, that Muenzer boastingly promised to catch all bullets in his wide sleeves; however, all his efforts were of no avail. His soldiers were intrenched behind breastworks and he sought in vain to incite them to scorn of death such as the Hussites had been wont to display. When the bullets struck their ranks, and mounted soldiers came on in solid files, only a few courageous men maintained their position. The most of them, used to the easy capturing of cloisters, took to precipitate flight.

As is the case with every recruit at the beginning of his first battle, the heart of our Hinnark beat violently when, at the side of his master, he rode along the long breastworks of the peasants. In spite of all his personal courage the thought was painful to him that he should pierce a fellow-man with spear

or sword. Naturally, the hatred against the peasants which filled most of the nobility was foreign to him. He himself was of humble birth, and he lacked the esprit-de-corps of the old mercenaries. For the first time he was in doubt whether he had done right to follow Younker Hans against the will of his parents. But he clenched his teeth and stormed forward like an old warrior. As the youngest squire he had been teased often enough by his older comrades; now his tormentors were to know that he was an absolute stranger to fear.

The thunder of the artillery and muskets, and all the din of battle had an intoxicating effect upon Hinnark, so that he scarcely knew what he was doing. When the peasant host fled with surprising quickness, the last trace of timidity vanished. The trade of war really seemed to be as free and gay as the camp songs made it appear. Arriving at the barricade, which at that place was no longer defended, he was the first to leap from his horse and to jerk a heavy cart out of the tangle.

"Fine, Hinnark!" his master encouraged him, as he rode through the opening, "Now follow me as rapidly as you can; there will be a merry swatting of peasants presently."

With one leap Hinnark was again in the saddle; they were the first at that particular place to break through the barricade. Before them stretched an open plain, over which the disjointed mass of the enemy were running in wildest flight.

Being possessed of a good horse, Hinnark caught up with his master before they reached the enemy. However, as he, spear in hand, came ever nearer to these fleeing people, he experienced such mercy for the poor peasants that, involuntarily, he drew rein and looked around as though seeking help. There, about a hundred steps to the left, he saw something that caused him to give vent to a cry of terror and to jerk his horse aside. Then he shouted to his master:

"Master, Younker Ulrich is about to be killed," and, without waiting for an answer, he rode to the assistance of the imperilled youth.

Even in the night before the battle, Younker Ulrich had drunk heavily. His cousin repeatedly encouraged him in this respect, even though he himself remained rather sober that evening. Awaking with a thick head, Younker Ulrich had no more sense than to return to the bottle. When, presently, the battle began, he could not manage his fiery horse. Spurning the control of the feeble youth, it cleared the breastworks and carried him far into the lines of the enemy.

His cousin Kurt was the best rider in the company. His horse also could have carried him over the wagons quite easily, too; but when he now saw the unhappy youth going along like a madman, a devilish smile spread over his features and he thought by himself: "That is the easiest way to get rid of the heir of Uhlenhorst, without a breath of suspicion falling on me. Surely, nobody can expect of me to follow him among those peasants, even if I were willing to risk the leap."

When Caspar, at his command and with the help of the squire of Younker Ulrich, finally shoved a wagon out of its place in the barricade, all three rode after Ulrich, but they came too late to help him. Younker Ulrich had much difficulty to keep in the saddle, let alone doing any fighting. His spear had fallen from his hands, and he was unable to draw his sword. In this way he raced among the fleeing peasants, who at first timidly leaped aside. But when they noticed how helpless the rider was, one of them quickly lifted his scythe and inflicted a deep cut on the front leg of his horse, so that it fell over and buried his rider beneath him.

The heavy fall stunned him for a moment, but the dreadful pain of a broken leg soon brought him back to consciousness. Then he recognized his fearful plight, his jag having passed away during the fatal ride. His horse had broken its neck and lay,

without moving, upon his leg. Already he saw the nearest peasants, armed with spears, scythes and other weapons, massing together in order to dispatch him. Looking for his friends, he managed with difficulty to look backward. Just then he saw his cousin Kurt riding through the barricade. At that moment the horrors of death got hold of him; his exceedingly sinful life came before him in one flash, and, raising his hands to heaven, he prayed: "Lord God, have mercy upon me, a poor sinner."

"You never had mercy on us!" yelled the peasant who had laid the horse low. "Now neither God nor men will have pity on you."

Then he swung his scythe high in the air to cut the throat of the fallen man, but a thundering: "Halt!" caused him to arrest his movement and to look back. When he saw two riders making for him in full gallop, he cried to his crowd: "Stand firm, men of the covenant; these riders have flesh and bones just as we have; we will serve the two just as we do this younker."

With this the gigantic leader of the peasants, who had lowered his weapon for a moment, raised anew his scythe to make a terrific lunge at his intended victim. In his haste and excitement, instead of striking the neck of the knight, he struck his coat of mail; the scythe broke, and, glancing, it produced merely a slight wound of the neck. With a curse the peasant threw away the now useless weapon and reached for his sword. This, of course, was a feeble weapon, compared with the long spear of Knight Hans, which, at that moment, was thrust through his breast.

The crowd of peasants, composed of about twenty men, followed the word of their leader and set up a stout defense. Also Hinnark had pierced a man; but the latter's long halberd had struck him on the shoulder His own spear was broken in his inexperienced hands, so that he was obliged to draw his sword. Only with the greatest effort the two horsemen were enabled

to defend themselves against this superior power. Thy could easily have ridden back, but in that case Younker Ulrich would have been lost. Therefore neither Hans nor Hinnark thought of their own safety. They were almost surrounded, when Younker Ulrich's squire came to their assistance. Younker Kurt had a much better mount than he; but purposely he restrained his fiery steed when he saw Hans von Hasselbach riding to the assistance of the fallen man.

"In this way I shall be rid at the same time both of my bitterest enemy and my most uncongenial friend," he thought. "Of such fortune of battle I had scarcely dreamed."

Old Caspar grinned knowingly into his red stubbles when he saw his master drawing the rein upon his horse and remained at his side. But other horsemen overtook them, and when the peasant crowd saw them approaching they took to their heels. At once, Hans and Hinnark, together with Ulrich von Uhlenhorst's squire, leaped out of their saddles and drew the wounded man from under the dead horse.

The latter had followed the whole fray with his eyes. When the murderous weapon broke, he sighed: "Thank God." When, instead of his cousin Kurt von Uhlenhorst, whom he had expected, he saw Hans von Hasselbach riding up, the very man whom he had deeply offended, there was a sudden change within him. Feebly he raised his hand, gave it to Younker Hans and said:

"Pardon me for ever offending you; you are a true knight and I owe you my life."

"You owe it rather to Hinnark than to me, for he was the first to notice your distress. I only did what every cavalier in the army would have done."

"Kurt did not do it, does not even look around at me; he prefers to stab peasants. Hinnark, come! You also give me your hand and receive my thanks. As soon as I reach home, my father shall give you five acres of land as your own. In case I do not get home

any more, let Peter announce it to my father as my last will."

"How you talk about not getting home again," said Younker Hans encouragingly. "The surgeon will soon set your leg, and on your neck you have only a scratch. Stay with the gentleman, Hinnark and Peter! I myself will call the surgeon of our duke."

With this he leaped once more into the saddle and rode away. The doctor was found presently, and soon the broken leg was set; nor was the wound on the neck serious. Yet the knight was wretched and dejected. The wild life of recent years had sapped his strength, and the fear of death would not depart for a long time. When he lay upon his couch in his tent, and Younker Hans was about to take his departure, he was very much depressed and begged:

"Stay with me, Hans; for a long time you have been my good spirit. You have often warned me against excessive drinking. I never obeyed your well-meant warnings and began to hate your unpleasant admonitions. Had I not drunk so heavily yesterday and today, my stallion would not have run away with me, and the whole army would not have occasion to deride me. Go home with me, Hans."

Younker Hans rejoiced heartily at the change of mind in the companion of his youth. For a moment the thought possessed him that, with the help of Ulrich, he might at last win the sister. But when he thought of the mother of his beloved and of his poor castle, his heart sank and he answered: "Kurt will accompany you home, and at his side I cannot ride. I must win honor and property in the world before I may venture to sue for your sister. You will be in good health shortly. If you then can put in a good word for me with your parents, it will make me very happy. Elsa will remain true to me. Of this I am certain, and if my life should be spared I shall sometime come home to wed her. I am thinking of entering the imperial service; for the Peasant War will soon

end after this day. Greet my love and tell her not to grieve unduly. From time to time I hope to send her a message. Now farewell. There I see him coming; we do not wish to fight out our difficulties at your sick-bed."

"Farewell, Hans; I fear I shall not see you again on earth. When I get home I will do my best to win my parents for you. My father is favorable to you already, but my mother rules in the house. I hope that you will find greater success in war than I did."

Hans had scarcely gone when Kurt stepped into the tent, all heated up from the chase.

"My, that was a stabbing of peasants, such as the world had never seen," he exclaimed with a coarse laugh. "I killed more than a dozen with my own hand. Compared with this enjoyment the finest boar-hunt is tame sport. Too bad that your awkward horse played you such a trick, and that you had to deny yourself this pleasure. I saw a whole crowd of helpers around you; therefore I rode on, especially since I should have had a fuss with that hypocritical Hasselbach. I hope nothing serious is the matter with the leg."

Seriously and gently the wounded man answered:

"It is broken, nor does everything within seem to be right since my heavy fall. Without the help of Hans and his Hinnark I should have perished long ago. Where did you stay so long?"

"My horse would not jump over the wagons as yours did, and when Caspar and Peter had pulled the wagon away it was too late," lied Younker Kurt. "Hans must have found an open place that he came to your side so quickly. Well, be glad that it ended so well."

The wounded man did not answer, but frowned heavily.

"Now, do not make such a mournful face!" continued his cousin, with loud laughter. "A broken leg does not kill an Uhlenhorst. Caspar is just drag-

ging up a keg of cloister wine, which the peasants stole somewhere; that will change your thoughts."

"The doctor forbade me to use wine; my wound-fever will be serious enough in any event. Had you not always incited me to drink, it is not likely that I should be lying here in misery."

"Now, did that rascal Hasselbach really set you against me? Just as if I had caused the trick of your horse."

"Hans never said a word against you. I, however, begged forgiveness for my offenses; for a rascal would not have saved my life at the risk of his own."

"The danger for him was not great; the peasants ran like rabbits. He only wanted to win you, that through you, he might secure Elsa," said Younker Kurt with a sneer.

Younker Ulrich, exhausted, kept still; but every effort on the part of Kurt to make him drink failed, and he rejected firmly the offered wine. Soon the wound-fever set in with vehemence. If his faithful squire, Peter Lange, had not been with him, he would scarcely have survived. The latter had been apprised by Hinnark of the relation of the younkers to each other, and he zealously watched that neither Younker Kurt nor Caspar at any time came to the sick man alone. Finally the fever abated, the bone had knit, and Younker Ulrich desired, as never before, to go home. The physician advised a longer stay, but Kurt insisted upon journeying homeward. The trip was undertaken, although the patient was scarcely able to endure it.

The battle of Frankenhausen was in fact rather a massacre than a battle. In the town itself, "Whatever males were found therein were killed," according to the report of the landgrave. The "prophet," Thomas Muenzer, had made his escape in a cowardly manner, as such boasters generally do when it comes to the test. Having been drawn from his hiding-place, he was put on the rack and compelled to renounce his fanaticism. Probably also the judgment of God, as

shown in the issue of the battle, moved him to this. Having received communion with one element, he was beheaded. "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword," say the Scriptures. The same fate overtook the Swiss Reformer Zwingli, as Luther often pointed out when he set forth his doctrine that a Christian must be a subject even to the "froward masters," and must rather suffer wrong than do it.

Muehlhausen was ravaged, and surrendered to the neighboring nobility for reprisals. These lords understood plundering and burning quite as well as the peasants. "Are you still Martinists?" the prefect of Scharfenstein yelled to the poor people of Lengefeld. "Now we will be your teachers, my Lutheran lads!" Thereupon he fired the church and village.

As formerly the waves of insurrection, so now the flood of princely revenge rolled over the land. The very Catholic Duke Anthony of Lorraine marched out like an old crusader against the Alsatian "Lutherans." The soul of a leader slain by the peasants, according to an account of the time, would ascend "to heaven among the martyrs and knights who, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, had sacrificed their bodies and goods." In Saverne eighteen thousand peasants, who had surrendered, were cut down by the mercenaries, and cast into what today is yet called "the heretic pit." At Koenigshofen on the Tauber, where Goetz von Berlichingen fled before the beginning of the battle, the peasants took to flight even before the first attack of the cavalry; and, as the reports state, a chase was conducted after them like a boar-hunt. By the end of June the revolution was crushed almost in the whole of Germany; only in Upper Swabia and in the Alps there were a few small troops of peasants who still defended themselves. Things looked dreadful in those sections where the peasant war was waged. In Thuringia seventy cloisters had been demolished or burned, in Franconia two hundred and ninety-two castles and fifty-two cloisters. The vengeance of the nobles cried to heaven. Only a

few, while administering punishment in moderation, were willing to grant peasants some relief from their excessive burden. Nuremberg remitted to the people the small tithe. Strassburg did the same. Margrave George wrote to his brother Casimir: "If all the peasants were to be murdered, where should we get other peasants to support us?" The tyrant, of course, did not permit this to hinder him in his doings. In Kitzingen he had the eyes of fifty-nine citizens gouged out; no one was allowed to lead or bind up these blinded people. They wandered about like unreasoning animals, and many of them died. No wonder that many peasants, whose hopes were at first raised so high, now lost all faith in God, like those Saxon peasants who, mockingly, said: "What does this vile priest preach about God? Who knows what God is, and if there be a God." Luther was often compelled to lament that the rabble showed themselves unthankful for the blessings of the Gospel. Yet if, in spite of this, the Lutheran peasant class, in the next centuries, grew to be such stalwart Christians, it is a glorious proof of the divine power of the Gospel.

CHAPTER VI.

Sin and Atonement.

IN his castle of Uhlenhorst, sat Herr Hans, anxiously waiting for a message from the army. While everything, so far, had remained quiet in his region, nobody could know how soon the insurrection, which had spread over middle and southern Germany, would also involve the North. If the princes in Thuringia should be defeated, everything was at stake. Furthermore, Hans thought of his son and heir, nor was it only the anxiety for his

life in the great war which oppressed him. Ulrich's heavy drinking in recent times did not please him at all. In spite of his slowness he observed the bad influence which Kurt was exerting upon his inexperienced son and heir, and for the first time the thought came to him:

"It certainly would have been better if my godchild Hans had remained Ulrich's comrade, even through the poor fellow should win Elsa and take her to the banks of his little brook."

Restlessly he paced up and down several times, looked down the road to the village, and had his morning drink brought much earlier than commonly. Since the new priest had begun to come to the castle almost every day, Herr Hans was becoming even more addicted to the cup than formerly.

"It is good that my wife insisted on bringing the jolly priest hither; for he really knows how to while away the time and to drive away care," he said to himself.

"Remarkable, indeed, that my Elsa can bear this fine nobleman apparently even less than she could the poor father who killed himself by drink. In the festive season she did not go to confession, and she avoids him here in the castle as much as possible. The poor child seems very much cowed since we ordered Hans from the place. I fear it will require quite a battle before she accepts Kurt. I cannot blame her for it, either; for young Hans with his open face would be more acceptable to me also."

He arose and looked out upon the street again. This time he saw the priest on his horse galloping toward the castle.

"Why, here comes our clerical friend already," he exclaimed in joy. "He comes a few hours earlier than usual, and it is not usual that he subjects his plump body to such a sharp ride. He must bring good news, most likely from the army." With this Herr Hans hastened to the door and down the steps with as much speed as his waist and gouty legs would

permit. Already at a distance the priest waved his hat and shouted:

"Good news from the army: the whole peasant mob has been cut down with scarcely any resistance."

"Thanks be to God! Whence have you the good message, dear father?" "A merchant who just came from Celle reported that yesterday a swift messenger sent by Duke Otto to his brother Ernest brought the message. Then I hastened to bring you the good tidings."

"Thanks for your trouble! But say, did the messenger not have any news concerning our boys?"

"Nothing more than that not a single one of the Luneburg knights has fallen; only a few have been wounded, and none dangerously so."

"Then the announcement is doubly welcome. Dismount, dear father; this great victory we must celebrate in a worthy way." With this Herr Hans turned to the door and shouted into the house with a voice that raised the echo:

"Hello, butler, bring the best wine, and not too little of it! And let also the kitchen do its best for both masters and servants; the victory is won, and our boys have safely escaped."

The priest was in no particular hurry to dismount, although a hostler stood ready to serve him. First he looked up to the window of Lady Brigitta, as if he there sought the true thanks for his message; nor did he have to do without them. The mistress of Uhlenhorst had the habit of sleeping long; the morning was always tedious until the hour of dressing and grooming brought relief from ennui. True, of late one hour was no longer sufficient for this purpose; the old chamber-maid, likewise, sufficed no longer. When the mother repeatedly complained about her, Elsa very cautiously called her attention to Dortie Peters as the most beautiful and skilful girl of the village. Lady Brigitta summoned Dortie, who by her deftness and insight soon won the full approval of her strict mistress. On this morning the lady, after

breakfasting in her room, sank negligently into a chair to have her hair combed. Dortie wove into the beautiful braids many a flattering comment on the long, glossy locks, which surely were calculated to arouse the enthusiasm of any man. She soon discovered the little weaknesses of her mistress and knew how to make use of them. That she was the ally of Miss Elsa and Younker Hans, her mistress did not even suspect.

The maid had just succeeded in combing out the long hair, when the loud voice of the master was heard below, though the words were unintelligible.

"Run to the window quickly and see what is going on!" commanded her mistress.

Scarcely had Dortie opened the window, when the voice of the priest was heard from the outside, announcing the victory over the peasant army. Thereupon madame could not contain herself any longer in her chair, although, with her loose clothing and flowing hair, she was surely no proper sight for the eyes of a man. Even Dortie, the hoyden, was ashamed of her as she leaned far out of the window and greeted the messenger of the victory with a shout. The priest, however, did not seem to share the modesty of Dortie at all. On the contrary, his face lit up as his eyes took in the intoxicating sight vouchsafed from the window, and, with a courtly bow, he repeated his message at length.

When the mistress finally returned to her chair, she found her sprightly maid unusually serious and meditative. But she gave her no time for much brooding; for she now began to preen and to prink in a way that Dortie had never witnessed. The mistress fairly bubbled over with the joy of life. That, according to the message of victory, her only son should have escaped unhurt in war, was certainly cause for rejoicing to the mother heart. But it seemed remarkable to the maid that the preening and the consultation of the mirror should take no end. When the mistress finally emptied her jewel-case and loaded herself with

ornaments and, at last satisfied, once more stood before the glass, she asked her maid:

"Am I now ready for the knightly caller?"

"Why, certainly, gracious lady," answered Dortie with her quick tongue. "It is only too bad that all the knights are in the army."

"You hateful thing!" exclaimed the mistress in anger, giving the girl a smart slap on the cheek. "Do you not know that Herr von Hohenkamp, in spite of his priestly gown, is just as noble a knight as any who rode with Duke Otto against the peasants? Where is your sense of which Elsa spoke so highly? If you again utter such nonsense I will chase you out of the house."

It is true that Dortie at that moment forgot that the priest belonged to the nobility; to her he seemed to be only a priest. When the mistress had gone down into the hall, the maid stood for a long time before the glass, but this time by no means from vanity. Dortie was observing the red spot on her left cheek. However, it was not resentment at the rude treatment which kept her standing so long in contemplation. Her rough uncle had given her many a knock and blow. She was not spoiled. Besides, to get a cuff from a noblewoman did not seem to her serious. She was contemplating the cause of that slap. Why should her mistress, who hitherto had been so surprisingly good to her, now all of a sudden be so angry? Could the report that this priest had formerly led a rather loose life in Luneburg really be true, as was recently reported in the tavern? At all events, she resolved with real womanly curiosity to keep her eyes open.

Down in the hall the priest made a profound bow before the beautiful form of the baroness; he was really bewitched by the sight of her and whispered:

"You come like a queen to the celebration of victory."

She blushed like a young girl at this comment, which she enjoyed particularly because she observed

from the admiring looks of the priest that the compliment was sincere.

The victory was royally celebrated at Castle Uhlenhorst. After a dinner with many courses, at which wine had heated their heads, the master withdrew for his accustomed noonday nap, which that day became a long, deep sleep.

Elsa withdrew to her room, where she and Dortie rejoiced together in the easy victory.

"If none of the knights fell," Miss Elsa said consolingly, "then certainly the squires got off easily, also. You do not need to be concerned about your Hinnark therefore; my Hans will not leave him in the lurch. The only thing I dread is the return of Younker Kurt with my brother. When they are back, they will make life hard for me."

"If it gets too bad," rejoined Dortie, "I will tell what I know about the rascal."

"They should know him, having been told how he treated you at the tavern; but mother blames Hans all the same."

"I do not refer to that; he has done something much worse. Hinnark thought I ought not to speak of the matter at all; but rather than see you be compelled to accept the younker, I will tell what I know."

After considerable coaxing the girl gave a graphic description of the attempted kidnapping.

"So that was the reason he could not be in the saddle on Ulrich's side!" exclaimed Miss Elsa horrified. "And to such a libertine my own parents wish to sell me for the sake of his fine property?"

Weeping, she held her hands before her face.

"They do not know him," comforted Dortie; "your father, at least, will not entirely disbelieve my story; at all events you will have a good ground for refusing the younker."

"You would only be punished as a slanderer if you spoke; for this reason keep entirely still; God will help me," was Miss Elsa's advice after hearing the facts about Kurt.

Also Madame von Uhlenhorst and the priest withdrew after the meal, but only into a quiet corner of the large hall, where they were entirely alone. If the man had not worn the priestly garment, a casual observer would have taken them for a happy married couple. Suddenly the woman sprang up, brought a little table, took wine from it and began to pour for herself and her guest. Then the priest arose, tore his ecclesiastical garment from his body, and stood there in a green doublet, such as was worn by the nobility of the time.

"I wish that I had never seen the cowl," he exclaimed, kicking the despised garment aside with his foot.

"Even in this coat you have remained a knight, and a very fine one," was the reply.

So they chatted with each other until, from a neighboring room, a loud yawning was heard, announcing the awakening of the master.

"There comes that old simpleton of a husband," the woman remarked in sarcastic tones. "Now it is necessary again to play the part of modesty."

Hastily she cleared away the evidence of her dalliance. With a sigh the priest put on his coat again, and the couple sat down to the chess-board, as if, during the whole time, they had done nothing else but play chess.

"Well, who has won today?" asked Herr Hans, stepping into the room and stretching himself after his fine sleep.

"Herr von Hohenkamp has completely gotten the better of me," said Madam Brigitta, choosing on purpose words with an ambiguous meaning.

"The gracious lady, according to my view, has voluntarily surrendered, for the victory never would otherwise have been possible," said the frivolous priest, with just as much ambiguity, throwing all the pieces on the board into a heap.

"You will surely stay for tea today," said Herr Hans. "My heavy wine has already made you hot, as I see by your cheeks. Shall we not take a little walk in the castle garden to cool off? Later the drink will taste so much better."

"With joy, Herr von Uhlenhorst; will the gracious lady accompany us?"

"Not now," answered Lady Brigitta, who was not eager to be seen too much in the presence of the priest by the servants.

After a short walk, the agreeable pastime of drinking was resumed, to be continued at supper, and even afterwards, without interruption. Herr Hans, who was inured to drink, though he was more accustomed to beer than to wine, was at last surprised at his guest, and said with laughter:

"Father, you have been drinking two hours longer than I have, and still you seem to be fresh, while my head is already heavy. You clerical gentlemen certainly have the advantage in everything."

"The monks have not in vain from time immemorial cultivated the vine. The castle cellars cannot be compared with the cloister cellars," proudly answered the priest, as he poured out another full glass with a fiery look at Lady Brigitta.

"Be careful, dear father," laughingly said Herr Hans, raising his finger. "If you continue after this fashion, my Jochen will have to haul you home, and then the people will say that our new priest is just as good a friend of the bottle as our old one was."

"I could empty this decanter, full as it is, and still ride home on my horse without assistance," boisterously said the priest, upon whom the immoderate consumption of wine was beginning to show its effects.

"And then, at the little bridge, you will take a cool bath in the creek," jestingly answered Herr Hans. "Be careful, dear father, that you do not finish the celebration of the victory in the creek."

"My faithful horse will find the road alone, and, once I am seated in the saddle, I shall not fall out,

even if I sleep. Be unconcerned about me, Herr von Uhlenhorst; rather give me another glass. I drink to your health and that of your beautiful wife."

That glass and many others were drunk, but when the shadows of the evening were lengthening, the head of Herr Hans sank down upon his broad breast, and soon his deep snoring made known that, for that day, he had taken his last drink.

The lady of Uhlenhorst looked upon her sleeping husband and then upon her guest. He caught her look and understood it. He arose, seized the hand of the woman, raised it to his lips, and whispered into her ear:

"My queen, it is time for me to ride home."

"I will accompany you; for in the game of love you have won the queen."

Hand in hand the two went out of the hall, locked the door, and in the dark hall the woman, forgetting all honor, sank into the arms of the adulterous man.

Dortie Peters, in her little room next door to her lady's chamber, waited for her return, wishing to assist her in undressing. But on that evening she was obliged to wait very long. The loud conversation of the tipplers was heard again and again from the hall. Finally, however, all was still, till the snoring of the master seemed to pierce the ceiling. But when the door was not opened even then, the curious chambermaid could no longer restrain herself. Long since she knew every nook of the great castle. Softly, like a kitten, she slipped out of her chamber door down the broad stairway. Here she considered whether she should steal into the garden and climb a tree to secure a look into the hall or whether she should try the key-hole. She had just decided that the key-hole was less dangerous when sudden steps were heard from within. which seemed to make directly for the door. Deeply frightened, she attempted to gain the stairway again; but the steps came so rapidly that she could just manage to slip behind the stairway, and to hide her-

self there. In her fear she promised herself that she would never eavesdrop again. Had those who were approaching gone straight to the entrance of the house through the vestibule, they would surely have discovered the girl by the light of the hall lamp, and that would have forever ended the fine life in the castle, where, with easy work, there were such fine clothes, good eating, and many other things which pleased our Dortie. Probably it might even have resulted in a beating; for that Madam von Uhlenhorst did not trifle, Dortie had learned that very morning.

As good luck would have it, those approaching locked the vestibule door without discovering the eavesdropper. But when the priest finally turned to the outer door and Madame von Uhlenhorst stepped back into the vestibule, the girl leaped up the stairway, threw herself on her bed and sobbed as though her heart would break:

"Oh, why was my curiosity so great?" If I only never had heard and seen that! How can I ever appear before my mistress without revealing this dangerous secret? How can I ever appear before the lovely, kind-hearted Elsa, without having her read this dreadful thing in my eyes? How can I ever attend confession? From me, at least, she will never, never learn what I have just seen, contrary to my will. Oh, already my mistress is coming up the stairway; how can I ever meet her?"

Quickly rising to her feet, she brushed the tears from her eyes, but Madame Brigitta gave her sufficient time to collect herself. After the lady of the house had accompanied her guest to the outer door, she came back into the hall. With an expression of disgust she looked upon her snoring husband, and then summoned a servant to get the drunken man to bed. She herself went upstairs. There, instead of calling her maid at once, as was her custom, she sat down before her large looking-glass, a true sample of Venetian art, and admired herself and her finery, which was reflected by the light of the lamp.

"Now life is worth living again; I can scarcely conceive how I stood it here for twenty years with my old farmer. For he is a real farmer according to his appearance and manner. And now no touch of old-fashioned sanctimoniousness shall prevent me from enjoying life. Or is this exclusively the privilege of princes like our old Prince Henry, who does not concern himself about his wife at all, although she is the sister of the elector of Saxony? Did not Herr von Hohenkamp say this very evening that the highest philosophy of the ancients was to get the most joy out of life? Did he not say that even the pope himself, to a great extent, lived after this principle? Did he not promise me that if my conscience would ever torment me that he, by virtue of his priestly office, would grant me full indulgence? Here is a cultured nobleman, who knows how to appreciate the beauty of a woman. Unlike the most of the green younkers, he is not going to look first at the simple daughter. Did he not say that, compared with me, she is as a poor violet by the wall compared with a full-blown rose? When Kurt comes back, he must take Elsa away, even against her will; her serious eyes distress me. Ulrich will gladly wander around in the world for some years more. He takes after me, and we have already pulled the wool over the eyes of my old farmer."

So this godless woman was basking in the elusive delight of sin. As long as the devil urges a person to sin, he knows how to paint sin in the brightest colors. Only too soon, however, she was to behold the counterpart of this hellish picture. When Dortie was finally called, she still found her mistress very much excited, and more talkative than ever. Fortunately the woman in her excitement did not notice for a time the depression of the girl. Finally, when she had directed the maid to robe her for the night, she once more stepped before the glass and raised her plump arms so that the full sleeves fell down upon her shoulders. Intoxicated by the sight of her voluptuous form, and entirely satisfied with herself, she asked the girl:

"Did you ever see finer arms, Dortie?"

The virtuous girl shuddered at the thought that these same arms shortly before had embraced a priest of God, and she could not answer a word.

"Well, can't you speak?" quickly asked the angered mistress.

"Anyway, why do you look so dreadfully sullen this evening, while I am so happy over the celebration of the victory? Take care, for I will stand no pouting, or you will get a worse slapping than you got this morning. Generally you are gayety itself, and that is why you are so agreeable to me. You must not take such a little slap so seriously."

"Pardon me, mistress; I am still a silly, inexperienced country girl," gently replied Dortie.

"You certainly are that, and in order that your stupid face may no longer rob me of my joy, you may go now."

Happy to have escaped from her embarrassing situation, Dortie went to her chamber; but she, too, was entirely too excited to be able to sleep. Quietly she sat down by the window and looked out into the star-lit night. Her heart was very heavy. Could she remain in this service since she knew of the forbidden relation of her mistress? But where else could she go? Back again to the tavern, to her rough uncle? She folded her hands and repeated the Lord's Prayer, as she always did when she was in trouble. A real prayer to her dear Savior, coming right from the heart, such as an Evangelical child has learned from father Luther, she did not know. However, the Lord's Prayer, spoken with deep devotion, somewhat quieted her. Looking up into the distant vault of heaven, her spirit wandered abroad, and where else should it rest than with her Hinnark?

"If you only had taken me with you," she thought, "for it will be impossible for me to stay here."

While she was still looking out into the night, she suddenly noticed a man coming across the castle bridge in greatest haste. Divining something dreadful, she

opened the window and asked the man what was the matter.

"Down by the bridge the priest has fallen from his horse and broken his neck," the messenger shouted up to the castle, with a voice that betrayed his horror at the dreadful sight he had just beheld. The girl screamed aloud; but her screams were drowned by the mad shrieks of her mistress, who had heard the hurried footsteps of the messenger likewise, and had just opened the window, Rushing down the stairway in her nightgown, she seized the ill-starred messenger by the arm, shook him as if he were accountable for the dreadful accident, and yelled at him:

"Say that you lie, churl, say that you lie! Just a short time ago he rode away from this mansion joyful and happy, and no horse threw him. Say that you lie!"

The fierce shrieks in the meantime had called together almost all the servants; also Miss Elsa, wrapped in a mantle, appeared. The messenger was dreadfully frightened at the actions of the mistress, and could only repeat again that he was an eye-witness of the dreadful accident.

"But how did you happen to be there?" finally asked Miss Elsa, who, in spite of the shock, was first to compose herself.

"We were still sitting in the tavern when the priest's servant-girl rushed in and shouted: 'The master's horse came home alone; some accident must have happened.' We started at once, but did not need to go far. We found the priest in the creek with his face in the water. He was still warm, and we were about to stand him on his head to bring him back to life, when we noticed that his neck was broken by the fall."

Like a maniac the mistress screamed anew, so that all stepped back from her in fright. Then her daughter took her by the arm, motioned to Dortie to take her by the other arm, and so, by persuasion and mild force, they got the mother back into her room.

When the hostler had helped the drunken priest into the saddle, he shook his head and mumbled:

"It is well that the horse has more sense tonight than the rider, or the father would scarcely find his way home."

As long as the drunken man sat in the house, talking to the baroness, he, in his passion, did not feel his drunkenness to any great extent. But on the outside his legs would scarcely carry him, and when he finally swayed in the saddle, weariness overpowered him. Feebly he recalled the warning words of the master about falling into the creek. He had to take care of himself; so much stuck fast in his wine-soaked brain. Had he only quietly left the rein to his faithful horse, no doubt everything would have ended well. But in his drunken condition the poor man mistook the shining water for the bridge and jerked the horse by force from the right way. At first it resisted, then, suddenly, it made a tremendous leap to clear the creek. The leap cost the neck of the unfortunate man. He had voluntarily neglected his time of grace, and now the wrath of God struck him in the midst of his sins. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

An effort was made in the castle to wake the master; but his drunken sleep could not be dispelled even by the repeated screams of his wife. His daughter and Dortie tried in vain to quiet the mother, who had become quite hysterical. Elsa indeed knew how much the mother thought of the priest; that even that day, far into the night, they had been together in animated conversation. Therefore she could at first well understand that the fearful blow knocked her mother almost senseless. But when hour upon hour passed and she could not be quieted, Elsa feared that the fright had resulted seriously, and she asked her mother whether she should send to the nearest town for a physician.

"I do not need a physician; I want a priest," the mother answered. But suddenly bethinking herself,

and seizing her daughter in a strong grip, she said in an unnaturally quiet tone:

"Child, I was crazy from fright; but it is over now. Go to sleep now, and I will try to do the same."

This sudden change of conduct appeared very suspicious to her daughter. However, the mother quietly permitted herself to be put to bed and insisted upon being alone.

"You are my good, godly child," she said with a tenderness which Elsa had missed painfully for years. "Give me a good-night kiss and then go to sleep; I am better now."

Moved to tears, the daughter did as she was bidden, and Dortie followed her out of the room.

Scarcely, however, had the girls left when the fear which had been suppressed with difficulty, appeared again. Sitting up in bed, the unhappy woman sobbed and wrung her hands, and heaped charge upon charge:

"He has departed in his sins, and his soul is now burning in purgatory, and probably even in hell. Where would my soul be, if I had died in place of him? Having seduced a priest of God, how can the vengeance of God fail to strike me? How can I ever find atonement for my sins? Oh, I think I can already see the devils flourishing their firebrands around my soul. Yesterday, urged by lust, I dared to doubt if there even be a God. Today his vengeance has struck my paramour, and threatened also me. How can I ever make atonement for this stupendous guilt! Ah, if only, in my misery, I had remained in the convent! My life would have been a torment, but I should not have had such an opportunity to sin. Why did God give me a heart thirsting for love, and a husband who could never satisfy it? Miserable wretch that I am, who can save me?

Thus she tortured her soul; bitter remorse had rapidly followed her sin! However, it was not godly repentance, which experiences sorrow for the sin itself, but only worldly sorrow, which merely regrets

the punishment and works death. Above all, she did not know of the Savior of sinners, who had borne also her sin and guilt, and who would have forgiven also her from pure grace and mercy, if there had been true contrition. She lacked altogether the second chief part of repentance, faith in the forgiveness of sins through Christ's blood and wounds; and her church itself was to be blamed for this faith, which alone can save, becoming so rare in Christendom.

"It is well that I sent Elsa away," thought Madame Brigitta after a while. "How easily I could have betrayed my own shame! Her serious eyes already eyed me in such a peculiar manner. But now I am afraid to be alone; I seem to see the form of the dead before me, and, O horror! where the scruff of the neck ought to be, I see a face!"

With a leap she sprang out of bed after saying these words, punctuated by screams, and ran into Dortie's chamber. The girl had lain down on the bed with her clothes on.

"Dortie, stay with me; I am afraid to be alone!"

The girl went with her, though she did not feel strong herself. She also was a child of her times. The fear of ghosts ruled in every house, and every unusual death aroused disquieting thoughts. She snuffed the night-lamp and urged her mistress to go to bed again. When she began to lament the fearful end of the priest, who had died without confession and absolution, Dortie said to comfort her:

"Gracious lady, you are rich; you could have a hundred masses read for his soul; then he will certainly get out of purgatory."

This was the first weak comfort that the despairing woman could grasp. Raising herself up in bed, she said:

"That was a good word, Dortie; this very day a messenger shall ride to Luneburg with the money. However hard it may be for the old gentleman, in a case like this he must open his chest; for he also loved Herr von Hohenkamp."

Not until the dawn of morning did Lady Brigitta really become quiet. However, it was the total exhaustion of her generally healthy body that brought her sleep. Now she had yet one great fear; would she not in a dream reveal her dreadful secret? But if the girl went away she would not sleep either, tormented by fear. She did not surmise that the girl already knew all, but in her distress she took courage and said:

"Dortie, if you will make me one great promise, and keep it, I will always treat you well. Never again will I strike you. If in sleep I should speak all kinds of foolish drivel, will you, without fail, keep it to yourself?"

Dortie willingly gave the solemn promise; for she had already given it to herself.

"Then sit down at my bed and hold my hand; I think in that case I could sleep at last."

Dortie did as she was bidden, and also prayed to God that he might send sleep to her mistress, who was suffering so dreadfully on account of her sins. Soon she had the joy of seeing her fall asleep. Naturally it was a restless sleep, and, as the mistress had feared, in her dreams she was pursued by the horrible vision. In broken sentences she talked about it, but Dortie was quite able to understand. When on awakening her mistress asked her whether she had talked in her sleep, Dortie could truthfully say:

"Nothing but what I already knew." This satisfied the mistress, and she presented her with a beautiful chain for her neck, which she had worn herself in her youth. Then she commanded Dortie to move her bed into her room, so that in the future she could always be with her mistress at night.

When Herr von Uhlenhorst finally awoke and heard the dreadful news, he exclaimed in anguish:

"I warned him, but I really did it in jest. I blame myself; for I should have sent a hostler along. But I do not even know when he rode home, having fallen asleep from the heavy drinking."

He went into the room of his wife, and was frightened when he saw her lying in bed so pale and weak.

"Were you together for a long time after I fell asleep?" he asked. She grew still paler, for her bad conscience attached a different meaning to the question from that designed by her husband. But her fear soon vanished when her husband continued to ask:

"Was he really so drunk that he could no more sit upon the horse? How, in that case could you permit him to leave the house alone?"

"He walked quite briskly to the door," she answered. "How could I anticipate such an accident?"

"I still accuse myself," said Herr Hans, sitting down upon the side of the bed, much depressed. "Poor man, just yesterday so full of life, and now before his eternal judge."

"Unable to sleep tonight, I have already vowed to have a hundred masses read for him in his monastery, in order that, at least in a measure, we may atone for what we have done."

Herr Hans was surprised at the high number; but he was in such a depressed frame of mind that his wife easily worked her will.

"And then tell the bishop at once that he should send us one of the strictest priests. The sudden death of both these men in such quick succession will cause comment and aid the Lutheran heresy, which is getting a start also in this section."

Her husband was quite satisfied with this proposal, although he did not anticipate her wish to take upon herself the very strictest Roman penance in order to free herself of guilt.

Weeks passed, and still the knight did not return from the war. Madam von Uhlenhorst became more quiet after the burial of the priest; in fact, in her unsubdued heart excuses presently began to crowd out accusations. She was already in doubt whether she should confess all. Was it really such a dreadful thing to have embraced a priest once? Was it not

rather the dreadful accident that had so shattered her nerves, and might the latter not have been purely accidental? She knew, indeed, that she was warring with her conscience, for this still tormented her greatly. Once she seemed to succeed in stifling her conscience, when a neighboring knight, who likewise had been in the war, finally brought information about Younker Ulrich's accident. Then the qualms of conscience returned with redoubled vigor. Her husband could not understand her at all. A simple fracture of a bone could certainly heal up soon; and if there really was a serious turn, Younker Kurt would certainly send word at once. But the woman wrung her hands and for the hundreth time she repeated in those sleepless nights:

"This is the judgment of God! My son, the only person on earth whom I still love, will have to die; my serious forebodings do not deceive me."

Her forebodings really were not to deceive her. When the sick man, wan and haggard, was lifted out of the wagon, the mother fell down by the stretcher in a faint. But the father said reproachfully to Younker Kurt:

"How could you start on a journey with a man sick enough to die?"

"He himself insisted upon coming home to die here," answered Kurt. "It is remarkable that from the very beginning he entertained no hope."

Peter Lange, Ulrich's squire, told the servants of course that the younker would certainly have been patient, if Younker Kurt had not pushed forward with so much determination, even in the roughest weather.

When Madam von Uhlenhorst finally awoke from her swoon, she threw herself wailing upon the couch of her son, only, however, to make his condition worse by her immeasurable grief. Her daughter finally led her tenderly away. In spite of her grief, she was the only one who remained quiet; for even the father sat by the couch of his son altogether broken in spirit.

Was this their heir about to pass away like his older brother?

Miss Elsa at once dispatched a messenger to the city to get a physician. Then she herself went into the kitchen to prepare a nutritious broth for the patient. When she had brought this to her brother and refreshed him with it, he took her hand and begged:

"Stay with me, my little Elsa, I have much to speak to you about."

So tenderly and friendly her brother had not spoken to her for many years. She rejoiced heartily over this, and she would gladly have inquired about her lover, but she did not venture to do so.

"Have you no question at all in mind?" asked her brother, with a touch of humor.

Blushing deeply, she laid her head on his shoulder. The brother stroked her silken hair and told about the man who had won her heart:

"Without Hans and his brave Hinnark I should have been murdered by the peasants. Kurt came much too late to save me. I believe he would have been satisfied had I perished there. You learned to know him before I did; he was my evil spirit. But you desire to hear of Hans. I begged him to forgive me and to come home with me; for I had a secret fear of Kurt. He said that he could not ride beside Kurt, that he thought of entering the imperial service, and that, when he had won fortune and fame, he would come to marry you. He does not wish you to be lonesome. He trusted from time to time to be able to send you news. 'Greet my love,' he said at parting. 'Elsa will remain true to me; of this I am certain; and if my life is spared, I shall eventually go home to marry her.' I promised him that I would intercede with our parents for him. It will be an easy matter with father as soon as I describe to him the course of the battle. It is mother alone I fear."

Her heart swelling with happiness over her

brother's change of heart and the message from her lover, she answered:

"Mother is no longer what she used to be, either. The dreadful death of the priest and your own sickness have so affected her that I often fear that she will lose her mind. She will scarcely urge me again to marry."

In this she was entirely right. Already in a few hours Kurt noticed that Uhlenhorst no longer welcomed him, and he rode away with his squire.

"One matter I would like to attend to at once," said the sick man. "Hans told me that his Hinnark was first to notice my distress. I owe my life above others to him. For this I have promised the brave squire five acres of land. Please call father, that this may be attended to at once. My debt towards God is great enough; I would not like to leave any debt toward a fellow-man undischarged."

The father readily consented, and his son begged:

"Then have tailor Smid called at once."

"Dortie must attend to that. It will be a great joy for the girl; for she is engaged to Hinnark," said the sister.

Dortie was fairly frightened when she heard her name called. She had not been as timid as her young mistress. Scarcely had Peter Lange dismounted when she had him by the sleeve and began to ask questions with such rapidity that the somewhat slow squire could scarcely find an answer. Nor is it strange that she learned much more than her mistress, especially about the brave conduct of Hans and Hinnark, and of the ugly work of Younker Kurt. Naturally Peter bore greetings from Hinnark to Dortie, and he even brought a letter for father Smid.

"Let me have it, I will take it to him at once," she said.

At this moment she was called, and in a few moments she was running to the village as only a girl in good health and in love could do.

Bolting into the tailor shop, she held the letter

in her uplifted hand, at the same time uttering her message in a veritable stream of words.

"Father Smid, come at once to the castle! Hinnark saved Younker Ulrich in the battle; for this five acres of land are to be deeded to him, and you are to get the deed. And here is also a letter from Hinnark, which Peter Lange brought along. Hinnark escaped unhurt, getting only a scratch on his left shoulder, which, however, amounts to nothing."

Father Smid fairly leaped from the tailor-bench; mother came running from the kitchen, and even the grandmother arose from her armchair and came limping to the girl with the aid of her cane. Indeed, there seemed to be too much joy at once, after all these weeks of bitter dread and sorrow. Quite unnecessarily Dortie urged:

"Read at once; for I must hasten back; my gracious lady becomes very ungracious if I am not present when she calls."

With trembling hand, Father Smid took his large tailor-shears and cautiously opened the letter from his oldest son. There were only a few lines, written on coarse paper. The style was stiff like that of a schoolboy; and yet what joy it spread in the tailor shop! Father Smid, after scanning it seriously, read aloud:

"MY DEAR PARENTS: — Pardon me for running away! Dortie has explained that. I am getting along finely. Younker Hans is always good to me. The stroke from the peasant whom I killed is already healing. Soon we shall ride southward to the imperial army; for here the war is over. A Lutheran comrade here said that grandmother is right: We must trust in Christ alone to get to heaven. Don't be concerned about me! I will be faithful.

With greetings,

Your son,

HINNARK SMID."

P. S. — "My Lutheran comrade has a New Testament, translated by Luther, and at the camp-fire we read in it. But it is much too large to copy, and I have no money."

Grandmother was the first to speak:

"Then it is really Luther's doctrine which has

long since brought me peace. God bless him if he makes known his message to the entire world."

"My Hinnark will not perish in the wild life of war," sobbed the mother, as she wiped her eyes with the corner of her apron. "He reads God's Word, and will remain good."

Also father Smid's eyes were moist, although he tried to conceal the fact in a manly way. He also rejoiced over the fact that his Hinnark would be good.

"But you must go with me at once, Father Smid," Dortie now reminded him. "Have you forgotten the grand gift that Hinnark has won for you?"

The good people, in the midst of their other joys, had naturally forgotten all about it. And when they came to think of it rightly, they could not believe it at all for joy.

"This Younker Ulrich, this wild haughty gentleman, should present us with five acres of land? Hitherto he has had only gruff words for poor people and the riding-whip, just like that coarse Kurt von Uhlenhorst." The tailor incredulously shook his head. "Everywhere these gentlemen know how to take; giving they have forgotten long since."

"But it is really true: Miss Elsa told me so, and you are to come at once. Younker Ulrich is very much changed, and as Peter Lange says, is not likely to live long. With Younker Hans he has become reconciled; his friendship with the brazen Kurt has been declared off, and the latter has already ridden home."

"Believe this joyful message just as much as you do that of the Lord Jesus Christ," earnestly said the grandmother, "They are both true."

Notwithstanding, the poor tailor went to the castle with a doubting heart. He still feared that the girl, in her haste and joy, had misunderstood the message. But when matters really turned out as Dortie said, and he returned home with the deed for five acres of land made out in the name of his son, he said to his mother solemnly:

"If men can be so merciful, I will no longer doubt the mercy of God, but humbly believe that God for Christ's sake forgives all my sins."

The new priest had arrived. He was a spare man, who showed that he was in earnest with his monkish fasting and castigation. In his pale face a pair of dark eyes glowed with mysterious brightness. His high forehead showed clear judgment, and his mouth, generally closed tightly, indicated strong will-power. Unlike his predecessor, he did not go to the castle for a pleasant introductory call, but waited until he was called. And the first person to come to him for confession was the noble lady. The evident failing of her son increased the anguish of her heart to the highest degree, so that she was driven to do something for relief. Whenever she hesitated in her shame to make an open acknowledgment, the priest by questions and threats knew how to overcome all resistance, and soon the whole life of the woman was spread out before him. Then his eyes shone in the dark confessional chair like an uncanny fire. While the woman was still speaking, the priest had developed a great, far-reaching plan, which could secure rich goods for his monastery, honor and distinction for himself among his brethren, and bade fair eventually to open the way to an abbotship.

"Your sin is unusually great," he said with a voice which, to the woman, appeared to come out of the grave. "To seduce a priest of God, a representative of Jesus Christ, is as bad as murdering father or mother. You are the murderess of the priest, as your own conscience rightly accuses you. The judgment of God, which overtook him, rests upon you. The severe sickness of your son shows conclusively how the wrath of God rests upon your whole house for the sake of your sin."

"Reverend father," said the woman with fear and trembling, "is there no atonement for this dreadful sin? Must I be lost eternally?"

"Our Holy Catholic church has forgiveness even

for the worst of sins; but it is a question whether you are ready to offer that expiation which your sin demands."

"Anything, anything at all I am ready to do, if I can only get rid of this fear, and save my son from the curse."

"Whether I can secure this last favor from God for you, I do not know; probably this earthly expiation is necessary to escape expiation in eternity. The fundamental cause of your whole sinful life lies in your leaving a nunnery. There you robbed God of a heavenly bride to become the bride of man; now you have become the bride of the devil."

The woman at the confessional gave a shriek.

"I knew that such was the beginning of my sin. Oh, had I only remained in the cloister, and been preserved from all the dangers of the wicked world! But tell me what penance can expiate my sin? I will do anything."

The priest drew a short scourge out of his coat, held it toward the round hole serving for auricular confession, and said:

"Do you see the dark spots on this scourge? They originate from my own blood. In my youth I entered the cloister! I have never touched a woman. I never fell into gross sin as you did. Yet I scourge myself twice a week, that through the pain I may have merit before God. Take this scourge, and every evening swing it ten times over your back, while before your family altar you repeat the entire rosary. Do that for a week, and then come back to confession; but remember that, unless you draw blood, the scourging will amount to little." The woman at the confessional, who, in the past, had thought only of pleasure and the care of her body, shuddered at the words of the priest. Still a person, in the distress of sin, will do anything for his salvation, if he can only have the proud, self-righteous thought that he is his own savior. Even the Gentiles do not shrink from the extreme torture.

Also Madame Brigitta promised to do penance, and thus she received absolution.

Dortie was surprised that evening by the command of her mistress to decorate the family altar with candles and a crucifix. Hitherto it had been used very little. Having carried out the behest of her mistress, she sought her rest.

In the adjoining room, the girl became aware of uncanny slaps and groans in front of the altar. Her first thought was to creep to the key-hole; but, ashamed, she pulled the covers over her ears, while she said to herself:

"Never again! I will not even listen. My mistress must do penance. This is a different priest from the previous one. I wonder what kind of penance he will prescribe for me when I acknowledge to him my eavesdropping? Would I even dare to do that? Will that not betray my mistress? The whole matter was not intentional on my part."

Dortie, also, had her qualms of conscience and, for a long time, she could not fall asleep.

The same evening, when the mother was wrestling with bitter pain to atone for her sins in heathen fashion, her children, in another part of the castle, were wrestling with the same great question of life: "What must I do to be saved?"

There was no Paul there, either, to give them the clear, eternally true answer: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house." But neither was there present a leader of the blind, who, with his pharisaically heathen counsel could lead them from the way of salvation.

"My little Elsa, are you going to get any rest tonight?" the brother asked. "The condition of my heart is somewhat better today, and my Peter will remain with me. You look already very pale from much watching."

"I will remain with you until you have fallen asleep, lest time should be heavy on your hands. Shall I again read to you from the History of the Saints?"

"If I could get better again, the legends of the Saints might perhaps serve me as a guide. But, Elsa, I am losing courage. The old doctor does not help me, either; his medicines taste bitter enough to burn out my vitals; but I do not observe any wholesome effect. O my little sister, I fear that in the autumn, when the leaves fall, I shall fall too; and I am not at all prepared for death; I am dreadfully afraid of it. But when I think of the Saints, how, with smiling lips and hands uplifted, they went into death, my fear increases."

"Shall we call a priest tomorrow? He is said to be a very strict man. Today already mother went to him for confession."

"On the evening following the battle I already sent for a priest; I faithfully repeated the Paternosters and the Ave Marias prescribed as penance. I placed two large tapers in his church instead of the one directed; but it brought me no peace. In my distress of soul I desired a Lutheran preacher; but Kurt so ridiculed my intention that I dropped it. If I only had secured one!"

"Do you know anything in particular of the doctrine of Luther, whom our priest calls an arch-heretic?"

"Up to the time that I was wounded, I am sorry to say, I paid no attention to the matter; since that I have had no opportunity. It is reported in Celle that Duke Ernest inclines to the new faith. But have you heard anything about it yet?"

"When, last winter, Henry von Zuetpfen was burned as a heretic, the old tailor Smid said to me that he had taught that one could be saved alone by grace, for Christ's sake. And he also told me that an old priest, in administering extreme unction to his mother, said when she could find no peace at all: 'Now dismiss every other thought, and hold only to our Lord Jesus Christ.' This brought peace to his mother in what she took to be her last hour; and as, contrary to expectation, she became better again, she preserved this

comfort throughout her life, and to this day she is willing to die in this faith."

The burning eyes of the sick man were riveted upon the face of his sister while she was speaking. Then he was silent for a long time, with closed eyes meditating upon what he had heard. Finally he said:

"I have always considered Christ, if I thought of him at all, as a severe judge of the quick and the dead. Can it be possible that he has atoned for our sins upon the cross? Will you not have old Mr. Smid come, that I may inquire more fully about the way to heaven? If that should really be true, how could the church always point us to our own good works? I fear that this availed only for the Saints, but not for such a dissipated fellow as I have been."

"Even old Mr. Smid cannot believe at all that we must depend on Christ alone. But I have received this glorious doctrine into my heart, and I believe that you also can find peace in it. As for you, do not give way to despair. God can still heal you."

A painful smile curved the lips of the dying youth as he answered:

"My leg will be stiff in any event; the ignorant surgeon set it crooked. But what is a knight who cannot sit a horse? No, Elsa, your sad looks tell me more than your words. I am lying on my death-bed. The heart-disease that my hard drinking brought on, is rapidly sapping my strength. And my severe fall is also to be blamed for it. I must prepare for the end. Let the priest come tomorrow; but after him also the old, pious tailor, I believe that he can help me more than the priest."

His premonitions were not to deceive him. Father Anselm merely increased his fear of hell and made it still hotter; nor could be bestow any other comfort, save the intercession of Mother Mary and of the Saints. By the payment of much money he was to draw upon the treasury which the Saints are said to have accumulated for fifteen hundred years. This indulgence would convert the dreadful pains of hell into

the penalties of purgatory, and even make the latter much milder. Should his life be spared, the surest thing would be to enter the monastery; that would certainly help. This was the counsel of the priest.

All this brought no comfort to the poor youth. At last he took heart and said:

"Reverend Father, did not Jesus redeem us entirely by his sufferings and death, so that we may trust in Him altogether?"

The priest leaped to his feet:

"That is the accursed doctrine of these Lutheran heretics concerning Christian freedom, which is so acceptable to the flesh, just as if a man did not need to contribute anything whatever to his own salvation. This has brought forth the whole Peasant War and driven unnumbered souls to hell. Do you think that I would daily castigate myself and observe in the strictest way the rules of my holy order, if a little faith were all that is necessary to salvation? If you harbor such heretical thoughts, I cannot absolve you, and the Lord Jesus Christ has said: 'What ye shall bind on earth shall also be bound in heaven.' Whence do you get this heresy?"

The sick man was much frightened at the sudden vehemence of the priest, but was unable in his ignorance to dispute with him, nor did he wish to betray his sister. Therefore he merely said:

"I come from Thuringia, the land of Luther. I do not say that I believe this, but merely asked you as my spiritual adviser."

Only with difficulty could the priest be persuaded to pronounce absolution upon the penitent.

When the sister entered the room once more, and looked at her brother inquiringly, he said:

"Send for the tailor, and let us see whether he will be a better father confessor unto me."

If Father Smid was already astonished when he was to receive a fine gift from the sick younker, he was altogether astounded when, a good deal more

slowly than the other time, Dortie again entered the tailor shop, and said:

"Father Smid, you are to come to the castle again this morning. This time you are to tell the sick man, who is thinking of dying, about our dear Lord Jesus."

"How can a poor, uneducated man like myself speak of such high things with such high-born men? Dortie, you are to blame for this! I am scarcely able to believe myself what mother says and what Hinnark wrote."

"I am not responsible," Dortie quickly defended herself; "my young lady told her brother about the Savior."

"Then let him call for the new priest. He will show him the right way; he is a very earnest man."

"He was with us this morning for a long time. You are to come all the same."

The old tailor was in a quandary. To talk to the young lady of the castle about such things, was quite easy for him, but to talk to Hans, the proud younker, that was an entirely different matter. Like a child he sought comfort with his mother, and found it.

"When a man is in the throes of death, he is no great lord any more. Take courage and go, and tell him about your and my faith in this Savior and Redeemer; probably the word will bring peace to him as it did to me."

And so it really came to pass. The heavenly message that had once been announced on the plains of Bethlehem by the mouth of angels did not at once fill the heart of the sick man with peace and joy. However, the Holy Ghost had cast out the anchor of hope by the simple message of the simple people, and amid all the storms through which this heart, formerly so proud, was still to pass, this anchor continued to sink deeper, until, having weathered the last storm, the ship of his life sailed into the safe harbor of peace.

Lady Brigitta faithfully did her weekly penance; but her son did not grow better nor her heart lighter.

Her back was sore, but her heart still more so. Full of fear, and with hesitation, she again went to the confessional. What still worse penance would the priest prescribe today? However, with an erect head and a quick step she came out of the confessional chair; for a burden was removed from her heart, and comforted she faced the future once more. How did the priest perform this miracle? Did he, like the man whose name he bore, tell the despairing penitent about the only saving grace in Christ Jesus? That he had just cursed as a Lutheran heresy when her son was at the confessional. No, he employed the highest wisdom of his church and, on this occasion, it apparently helped.

"There is one perfectly sure way left for you to merit the grace of God and to atone for your dreadful sins. I have already told you that the real cause of your downfall consisted in robbing heaven of a bride. Atone for this severest sin, and all your other sins will readily find forgiveness."

So spoke the monk. What he said was, on one hand, the expression of his monastic principles, and, on the other, an attempt to carry out the great plan conceived by him when the woman confessed the first time.

"Willingly would I atone for my great transgression," answered the lady. "If my husband were dead, I would today yet enter the nunnery; but how can I follow your advice?"

"Have you not a blessed daughter, who is in the same age in which you were when you ran away from the Lord? Let her make the sacrifice for you; then you are free."

The penitent fairly caught her breath; no word could be brought over her lips. The priest thought it was motherly sorrow, and he hastened to relieve it.

"I have indeed heard that your daughter is virtually engaged to Herr Kurt von Uhlenhorst; but when your everlasting salvation is at stake, and proba-

bly also the life of your son, you should be ready to make any sacrifice."

Now she found speech again. It was not fright and sorrow that made her speechless, but surprise and joy. This the priest, of course, could not know. She herself had already thought of this expedient, but feared that it would not accomplish the purpose because it seemed entirely too easy. Now this severe father confessor proposed this method himself, and the dreadful burden was taken from her. Even if her child had hitherto not shown any inclination for convent life, when the mother's peace of mind and the brother's life could be purchased with it, her tender Elsa would certainly yield. He promised her full forgiveness for all her sins on the day when her daughter should be received into the convent, and, happy as she had not been since the death of the former priest, she went away.

Father Anselm remained for a while yet in the confessional, although no other penitents were in the church. A proud smile played about his mouth. Well satisfied, he rubbed his hands and said to himself:

"The son will soon sink into the grave, and the daughter will go into the convent; and as she is the only heir of this great estate, it will fall to the convent. Such a gift the convent of our order never received. My brothers will not forget that when the next abbot is elected. Here I have rendered the church, which alone has the power to save, a double service."

At Uhlenhorst the severest conflicts now took place. With great discretion, Lady Brigitta first spoke to her husband. The old man was entirely broken by the apparently hopeless sickness of his son and heir. Therefore his wife, who always controlled him, soon found her wish acceded to. It did not take him long to renounce his own desire for hers; but he well knew of the love of his darling for Hans von Hasselbach, and it was very difficult for him to sacrifice that. When the father, in deference to the wishes of his

wife, advanced upon the heart of the daughter and intimated that she should seek the seclusion of convent life, she wept upon his breast and confessed all. It seemed too hard for his tender heart to compel Elsa to renounce her affection. But his wife sent him to the confessional, and the wise father Anselm knew how to break his opposition. That such a step would be the means of saving the life of Ulrich was the argument that he brought to bear upon Elsa, who, between her father and mother, was in a dire predicament.

Unexpected help, however, came from her brother Ulrich. While he did not actually know of the transgression of his mother, he surmised it. The inconsiderate Kurt had dropped all kinds of remarks about the former life of Herr von Hohenkamp and of his relation to Madame Brigitta. In the dissipated life which the son at that time was leading, he was little concerned about the gay life of his mother. It merely served as a bolster for his own conscience. Now he thought of it with sorrow. It explained to him the deep distress of the mother, after the sudden death of the priest, and her fervent wish to send her daughter to the convent. When his sister, therefore, with tears in her eyes, asked his advice, he counseled her not to go; and this was to her an unutterable comfort.

"You will not save me by your sacrifice, dear sister, as the priest is trying to make our parents believe. Thank God that I have learned to know his Son as my Savior. You cannot and shall not atone for my sins; my Savior has done that on the cross. I am now certain that Dr. Luther is right in regard to this chief doctrine; and no doubt he is therefore right when, as I have heard in the army, he rejects cloister life as unnatural and against the will of God. Upon his advice, a good many cloisters have become empty. After I am dead, father will no longer torment you with the cloister; and probably our mother will finally come to the Evangelical faith, in which I hope to die. I believe that my end will come sooner than I have

thought. Stay with me tonight. I shall not deprive you of your sleep much longer."

His forebodings did not deceive him. At midnight the condition of his heart suddenly grew very serious, and he said softly:

"Call our parents; I believe the end is coming. Call also Dortie Peters."

When the weeping sister had carried out his wish, and the persons called stepped into the deathchamber the dying man spoke first to Dortie:

"Forgive me that on Sylvester Eve, in a fit of drunkenness, I spoke of you in so vulgar a fashion. Also, I beg pardon of all the servants in my home; for I was often unjust toward them."

Then, turning to his mother, he took her hand, and, with an effort frequently broken by his labored breathing, he said:

"My spiritual knowledge is weak; but I believe that my Lord Jesus Christ has atoned for all my sins upon the cross, and, depending on this, I am ready to die. In addition to asking your forgiveness for my wild life that has caused you much sorrow, I have only one more request; do not torment my sister any more with the proposal that she enter the nunnery. She is espoused to a brave man, whom I fully learned to know when I was in danger. Give her to Hans von Hasselbach when he comes to ask her hand. Kurt is not a good man; I have learned to know him, though I do not wish to charge him with anything when I myself so soon shall be before the judgment bar of God. Tell him that I forgive him the wrong he has done me."

Entirely exhausted, he sank back; the spasms returned, and as the day dawned, he heaved his last sigh.

"Jesus Christ!" were the last words that the listening ear of his sister perceived.

He had only learned a little of Luther's doctrine; but this little, in the hand of the Holy Ghost, was sufficient to set free his soul.

The father fulfilled the last request of his dying son. Never again did he speak to his daughter about the convent, especially now since his Elsa was his only comfort, without whom he did not think that he was able to live. What the dying son said about Hans and Kurt was entirely according to his mind, and Elsa was to receive the whole rich inheritance. That everything which he had received from his father, together with his own savings, should go to the nunnery, was not all according to his liking. But his wife thought otherwise.

On the day following the burial she again went to confession. Since the only anchor of hope which the priest had shown her would not hold, she was again on the verge of despair. The death of her son, rendered peaceful by his trust in the blood and wounds of Jesus Christ, did not make the least impression upon her. On the contrary, she feared that through the heretical faith he got all the deeper into purgatory, and she at once wished to have a hundred masses read for his soul. To her great joy the priest knew another anchor of hope for her sins, which was almost, if not entirely, as good as life in the convent, namely, a journey to the graves of the apostles in Rome. She at once resolved to go, if the priest himself would accompany her and guide her, body and soul.

"I am willing to do it, if my order sanctions it," said the priest. "I have already made the way once. But your daughter must accompany us to make the journey effectual. Probably, when in the Holy City, she will be inspired with joy for convent life," he added astutely. "But this latter you must be no means express to her, or she might take fright."

For a long time Herr Hans did not wish to hear anything of this far journey, which was not without danger, but his wife would not abandon the project. The priest continued to urge with might and main, and Elsa did not refuse very long, much to the astonishment of her father. She pitied her despairing mother. And was not Hans von Hasselbach in the

South? Might she not in some way meet him there? Or in some way get information to him that her father was no longer opposed to his suit? Then her youthful desire to travel added another inducement to the project, so that Miss Elsa had soon decided to accompany her mother. Her trusted Dortie would go along, too, so that she would not become lonesome. Of the selfish thoughts of her mother or the dark intentions of the priest, she in her innocence had not the least inkling. While the prospective journey was a matter of conscience to the mother, a matter of filial duty to the daughter, it was for Dortie a real joy. Being young, she loved adventure. What wonderful experience she would have on this long journey! Naturally, somehow, somewhere, she would find her Hinnark. If he could at the right time cut Younker Ulrich and himself out of the ranks of the mad peasants though he had not even ridden forth at his side, how much more could he help Dortie if she should get into trouble. To this inexperienced child, the world did not seem nearly so large as it is. Like a cyclone she burst into the tailorshop and shouted with a loud voice:

"Now we are all off for Italy, for the holy city of Rome, to see the pope. My gracious lady believes that, without the blessing of the holy father, she cannot find peace. Then I will search till I find Hinnark, and will bring him home. Now that we have five acres of land, it is not necessary for him any more to go to war."

Happy youth!

CHAPTER VII.

On the Pilgrimage.

WHEN the pilgrimage was once decided upon, the execution of the plan was not long delayed. It was now mid-summer. In order to get back before winter, there was no time to be lost. Brother Anselm received the ready permission of his order to make this pilgrimage; and, according to custom, a young brother was sent along as companion. These two were to go on foot, while the servants and the women were to ride. With the bad roads at that time, it was easier to get through on horseback than with a carriage. Miss Elsa was a skilled rider; also her mother was used to the saddle, even though, in the last years, she had seldom occupied one. Only Dortie had first to learn to ride, which, with her cleverness and eagerness, did not require much time. Very proudly she rode with Peter Lange into the village one evening in order to take leave.

This was soon accomplished at the tavern and with other acquaintances; but in the tailor-shop, which was her real home on earth, it lasted rather long. Father, mother, and grandmother Smid had a good many earnest words to say to the young inexperienced girl, so that, in spite of her sunny disposition, she became quite serious.

"Dortie," said the master, as he said farewell, "let nothing turn your head out in the world. Take especially good care of yourself at the taverns! I know from experience that you do not always find the best people of the world there. Everywhere snares are laid for a pretty young girl."

With flashing eyes, Dortie drew her greatest treasure, her dagger, out of her girdle and said: "No one shall seize me again as Caspar and Kurt once did."

"Girl, where did you get that knife?" Mother Smid exclaimed. "Now I am altogether alarmed about the journey, if even women must think of hewing and stabbing."

"Child, I do not have in mind those enemies so much whose evil deeds you can resist with a knife. Trust more in God; with your own power you accomplish very little."

Early the next morning the little company started. Herr Hans accompanied the little throng to Celle; then he came home with a heavy heart. It was especially hard for him to take leave of his only child.

"My little Elsa," he said when his daughter lay in his arms with sobs. "I am as sorry as if I were to behold you for the last time. Probably it is Ulrich's death that causes me to be sad. Oh, if you were only at home once more."

The mother and the priest heard the tender words. The former grew somewhat pale when she thought of her secret wish; but the priest merely closed his lips the tighter. If he should succeed in executing his plan, the misgivings of the father should turn out to be only too well founded. Pope Leo X., under whom the Reformation was launched, had been an entirely worldly, yes, a pagan-minded, man. He was followed by Hadrian VI. Personally honorable, and godly after the Catholic type, he had sunk into the grave with a broken heart. In the fierce conflict between France and Spain over Italy he had vacillated hither and thither, having hardly an opportunity to think of the Lutheran heresy. His epitaph reads: "Here rests Hadrian VI., who had no greater misfortune in life than to attain to the highest power."

Hadrian's successor, Clement VII., a relative to Leo X., of the renowned house of the Medici, was likewise a diplomatic statesman, who was especially concerned about the temporal power of his house. Personally respectable and more priestly than his relative Leo, he, from the very outset, loved crooked ways nevertheless. Although he was put upon the

throne by the emperor, he did not support his policies, and soon secretly joined France.

Scarcely any other event in the providence of God served the German Reformation so well as this split between the emperor and the pope. The emperor, who had not been in Germany for eight years, found no opportunity to carry out the edict of Worms against Luther and all the Evangelicals. Joyfully the Gospel could spread after the storm of the Peasants' War.

Already in November, 1524, the pope had made a secret treaty with France. The emperor declared that he would go to Italy and revenge himself upon the foes, "especially on this craven, the pope; today or tomorrow Martin Luther will probably become a useful man."

King Francis of France, after months of dissipation, had again mounted his battle-steed and marched to Italy with a powerful army, where he besieged the strong city, Pavia.

In spite of the immense and never-ending financial difficulties, the emperor succeeded in collecting an army of twenty thousand men, the best troops in which were the mercenaries of old Frundsberg. Many who held the Lutheran faith were among them, and to these the fight against the pope and France was a special joy. In a ballad on the battle of Pavia one of Frundsberg's mercenaries sings:

"The pope is verily a shepherd!
He calls himself a saintly man
And hate and rage begins to fan.
The Christians he will kill, I say.
This is indeed a mournful lay."

On the twenty-fourth of February, 1525, the imperial troops had defeated King Francis at Pavia and taken him prisoner. Italy, however, remained hostile to the emperor, but peace had scarcely been made on the thirteenth of February, 1526, at Madrid, when Francis again broke it. On the twenty-second of May, 1526, the pope released the king from his oath and

joined him against the emperor, who still had about ten thousand men in Italy.

As our pilgrims, after a successful journey, were now approaching the Alps, they came one evening upon a company of the imperial forces commanded by Frundsberg, who were on their way to Italy. The last days all manner of disquieting reports had been heard from crowds of peasants, who had not yet become quiet. Especially in the Alps there were still some hard fights. Therefore the lady said to the priest:

"Would it not be more advisable for us to join this troop? For if we should really meet a crowd of peasants, our two servants could offer but little protection."

Father Anselm tried to raise all kinds of objections, especially on account of the girls, who, it appeared to him, were not safe in a throng of mercenaries. In reality, he himself did not believe this; for mercenaries on the march were subject to a strict law of their own. Whoever did anything dishonorable might quickly make the acquaintance of the provost, or even be hanged. Especially old Frundsberg himself was a pious, Swabian knight who insisted upon strict order. It was he who, years before, at the Diet of Worms patted Martin Luther on the shoulder with the words: "Little monk, little monk, you are now setting out upon a hard trip, such as I and many another warrior never made in even the hottest battle. But if you are sure of your cause, be of good cheer!"

What Father Anselm feared more than the rudeness of the mercenaries was their Lutheran faith. In northern and middle Germany he watched very carefully that his wards should never come into contact with the Evangelicals. Wherever it was possible, the night was spent in cloisters or in the houses of priests. Now, of course, they were in Bavaria, where the edict of Worms was strictly enforced, and a stake was waiting for every heretic. Notwithstanding, the cautious father made first the acquaintance of the leader

of the company before he gave his consent. When he found him to be a zealous Romanist, who thought that among his people there was not one Evangelical follower, he gladly gave his consent.

The line of march was formed as follows: At the head rode the pilgrims, to avoid the dust and the din. They were often joined by the captain, one Herr von Eberstein, who was rather pleased with the new traveling companions and rendered them every possible service. Then came the mercenaries, who, impressed with the two young horsewomen, gave vent to their feelings through many a joke and song. Finally came the camp followers, a crowd of the soldiers' wives and children, together with some merchants. The leader of this throng was a sutler, Mrs. Marianne, a hearty, robust person of forty years, whose husband and only son were serving in the army. In a small wagon, drawn by one horse, she carried beer, wine and whiskey, and all kinds of eatables. She was really the mother of the whole company, especially of the younger soldiery.

Of course, our Dortie enjoyed the new traveling companions most of all. For a long time she had been looking for something like this. On the first evening already she became acquainted with Mrs. Marianne, and when the latter noticed how apt the beautiful, well dressed girl was in dealing out drinks, and how the soldiers swarmed around her and for her sake drank more freely than commonly, their friendship was sealed. At first there was some difficulty on account of the language. Dortie, who found the unaccustomed riding vexatious, on the next day tied her horse to the sutler's wagon, climbed into it, and sat down with her. Soon she had learned her dialect. Dortie did this by no means just because she was lonesome; she had a distinct purpose in it. Most assiduously she was searching for news about Herr von Hasselbach and her Hinnark. Only an old greybeard, who had also been at Frankenhausen, remembered the two men, who, by their daring rescue of

Younker von Uhlenhorst, had attracted the attention of the whole little army. Of course, he had subsequently totally lost sight of them. For Dortie, however, this clew served as proof that her Hinnark would not be so very hard to find. She insisted upon a promise from everybody she met to greet Hinnark, if they should meet him in Italy. Also Miss Elsa became acquainted through her with Mother Marianne. When she recognized her as a crude, but honest and sensible woman, she ventured on the last day of their journey to give her a note to Hans von Hasselbach. Mother Marianne herself could not read, but she felt herself highly honored by the confidence of the young noblewoman, to whom she made beautiful presents, and promised to do her very best to deliver the letter to the proper address. Also Dortie, who had learned to read and write passably from Miss Elsa, proudly added a note for her Hinnark. The major part of the message mother Marianne was to deliver by word of mouth.

When the death of his cousin was announced to Kurt von Uhlenhorst, he, observant of conventions, made a sad face and expressed his deep regret. But when he was alone with his Caspar, he said:

"Everything turns out well. Ulrich, the simpleton, is out of the way. Hans von Havenothing is in Italy. The devil would have to have his finger in the pie, should I be prevented from carrying out my plans. Try to screw your hang-dog looks into a decent appearance of mourning, and put in a good word for me with the servants. Tell them that, in reality, I am a rather good fellow, even though I usually put my worst foot foremost. Miss Elsa, too, is one of those noble fools who deal very tenderly with scullions. Through these people she may get a better opinion of me. I only hope that her mother has gotten her conscience into better shape since the sudden death of her beloved priest."

Caspar grinned all over his broad red face; then

he screwed it into such serious wrinkles that his master laughed and said:

"No, you rascal, you do not yet need to begin to act the godly man, or your hypocritical grimaces will spoil my appetite."

"That was just a sample," Caspar replied with a guffaw, and went out.

After the burial Herr Hans von Uhlenhorst said to his nephew with tears:

"Kurt, I have long since felt it, and Ulrich acknowledged it on his death-bed, that your bad influence brought him to his grave. He forgave you and died at peace with God and men. I am to tell you that he has forgiven you. Kurt, you are the last of our tribe; I do not wish today to accuse you, but as your only relative I admonish you: make a change!"

It was, after all, a blow to the hardened sinner to hear his uncle talk in this way. For a short moment he really was ashamed in the presence of the man who in the last few weeks had aged years. But soon this tender feeling gave way to cold calculation; the very fact that his rascality had been found out must serve his purpose. Apparently in deep contrition, he laid his hand over his eyes and said with a well dissembled sob:

"Uncle, I have long since felt this. If I could only make amends! But I am by nature frivolous. In spite of all good resolutions, the frivolity would break out again without a constant guide at my side. Who could answer that purpose better than your Elsa, who has won my whole heart? I would follow her; my great love would overcome my detestable frivolity. By kindness to her I will make atonement for the sins I have committed against her brother."

The honest old gentleman believed the rogue. His straightforward mind could not conceive such hypocrisy. He would have been well satisfied to have his name and line perpetuated through Kurt and Elsa, now that Ulrich was dead. Of course, Ulrich's warning and Elsa's love spoke against this. But was

it not really possible for Kurt to change, and might Younker Hans not perish in the war? Therefore he said to his nephew:

"Wait a little while, till the grief for the dead has somewhat abated; if Elsa is then satisfied, my blessing shall not be wanting."

The father was thus readily won; with the mother, however, who formerly had been his main advocate, he could not speak. She was entirely in the hands of the priest, who had warned her not even to speak to the godless man. Without speaking, she shook hands with him when he expressed to her his sympathy. But he thought: "I shall get you around all right. If you do not yourself get tired of your sanctimonious doings, I will threaten to expose you, and that will bring you to time." Through Caspar he learned to his joy that the dying man had requested the parents no longer to speak to the sister about the convent. While Ulrich, as Kurt also learned, had not failed to use his good offices in behalf of his new friend Hans von Hasselbach, the latter was far away and did not worry his rival for the time being.

When he received word about the journey to Rome, he swore like a Turk. He recognized the scheme of the priest at once, and resolved immediately to foil it.

"Whoever is sent to Rome, never returns," he said to himself. "For this reason Frederick the Wise did not permit Luther to go thither to give an account of himself. Too bad that, for once, he was so wise; otherwise Luther would now languish in some Roman cell, where sun and moon would never shine on him, and all this revolution and all the nonsense of fighting about religion would have been spared us. The old humanists, with their heathen philosophy of enjoying life, were more according to my taste. In the government of the world I have never observed any evidence of that God of whom the Christians fable so much. There the shrewdest head, the strongest fist and, above all, money rules. I have the head, also the fist, but I

lack the miserable money. My creditors are constantly becoming more unendurable. If I do not catch my little goldfish, I can journey through life like that pauper Hans von Hasselbach, without prospects in my impecunious condition. Therefore I will follow these pilgrims to Italy, to save my lamb from the nunnery. If this does not succeed, I must turn my estate over to the usurers and try my luck in the imperial service."

Scarcely had the pilgrims started when Younker Kurt and his squire were at their heels. The younker had turned virtually his last steer and the last piece in his mother's jewelry-case into silver to raise money for the journey; for he could no longer borrow. He always remained a day's journey behind the pilgrims. Not until they should have arrived in Italy, or, rather, in Rome itself, did he intend to approach them. Already in Bavaria he thought of offering them his protection, but the mercenaries had anticipated him. His calculation that his company would not be rejected in Italy, proved correct. In that country, torn by war, the people were never very friendly to the Germans. In the cloisters, of course, there was always a friendly reception; but on the roads one met suspicious characters enough, so that the protection of the mercenaries would be missed very much.

The surprise, therefore, was not altogether disagreeable when, one fine morning, Younker Kurt and his squire overtook the pilgrims. Only the priest and his colleague looked at him with resentful eyes. Lady Brigitta, who already had become very fearful, rejoiced at the unexpected protection. Her pilgrimage was safe from harm, so far as Kurt was concerned, even though he should attempt to hinder her in her holy undertaking with his mockery and ridicule. She felt very safe under the protection of her priest, and was willing to perform all required penances in Rome to the last dot, in order to secure for herself forgiveness of sins and plenary indulgence.

Miss Elsa even looked upon the appearance of

the younker as a factor calculated to relieve the pressure upon her to take the veil, however disagreeable the man otherwise was. The priest, with the mother's consent, had frequently, although guardedly, spoken to her about the glory of convent life. She felt perfectly safe in her love to Hans. Who, then, could harm her in a strange land? She felt it would be a good thing if her mother could be dissuaded from exerting pressure upon her daughter to take the veil. Dortie, who, to her regret, now had to go horseback again, made a bold face and felt whether her dagger was yet in place. She also made up her mind that the two rascals had not undertaken this far journey for their own sake, but for that of Miss Elsa. Caspar, with a mawkish face, tried to start a conversation with her; but she gave him no answer, and rode close to her young mistress. Younker Kurt showed himself a full-fledged cavalier. With not a single word did he touch upon his old purpose. He remarked that he had already partly resolved to ride to Italy in order to join the army of the emperor when he received word of the pilgrimage. He made up his mind quickly, discovered traces of them, and now wished to journey in their company if his own should be acceptable, especialy since there would scarcely be any war with France before spring.

"We shall be very grateful to you if you will accompany us," said Madam von Uhlenhorst. "We have heard in the cloister of the many robber bands which are said to haunt the vicinity of Rome particularly."

Had she consulted her confessor first, the invitation would not have been extended. Afterward, of course, he did not care to cancel it. Younker Kurt carried his hypocrisy so far that he expressed regret over his free and easy life, and hoped that the pilgrimage to the holy city would also be for him a blessing. The mother believed him and rejoiced over it. She herself had led a similar life, and she confidently believed that the pilgrimage would atone for it. If

Younker Kurt really cared to change his life, so much the better. On the others, however, he made no impression with his hypocrisy.

After their safe arrival in Rome the priest took the women to the nunnery of his order, in which there were also German sisters. Younker Kurt stayed in a neighboring German inn.

The Eternal City, as old "Roma," the mistress of the world, had been called, made a deep impression upon our travelers. True, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, it lay for the most part in ruins. Only the numerous churches were well preserved, and it was for their sake that, year in and year out, so many thousand pilgrims passed through the portals of Rome. The cathedral of St. Peter, the largest church of Christendom, was not yet completed. The millions of money, raised by the sale of indulgences, which had been sent to Rome for this purpose, had been used by the greedy pope for other purposes. Madam von Uhlenhorst was happy. She traveled with her confessor from shrine to shrine under the delusion that, in this way, she could satisfy a righteous God. Her contrition was merely an external, worldly sorrow for the results of her sins. Therefore it appeared to her that just such an external penance as she was performing by her pilgrimage was sufficient expiation. The poor heathen with all their worldly wisdom never got beyond the thought that the works and the suffering of man should atone for sin and satisfy the Deity. Fifteen years before a German monk had visited these same shrines with a burning desire for the forgiveness of sins, but on the very pinnacle of his penitential experience, when he was creeping up the Stairs of Pilate with bare knees, there rang in his ears like thunder what Habakkuk the Prophet had written in characters so large that whosoever would pass by might read: "The just shall live by his faith."

Luther had not led an immoral life; but enlightened by Christ Himself concerning God's law, he had learned the meaning of sin. At once all his own

work and merit was scattered before Him whose eyes were like flames of fire. Even the much lauded remedies of his church had no effect on him in view of his sterling honesty. "My sins, O, my sins," he cried, standing at the verge of despair. Then God had mercy upon him; for "He layeth up sound wisdom for the Righteous," and upon untold millions with Him. He revealed to him His dear Son Jesus Christ, who with one sacrifice has atoned for all time for all men who believe. Then the peace of God came into his wounded conscience, and today yet, through the word and work of Luther, it flows through the world.

Notwithstanding, Madam von Uhlenhorst was not altogether happy and satisfied, and this was the fault of the priest. He aroused her fears by asking whether she was entirely sure that she had confessed all her sins, whether her contrition, her devotion at these holy places, had always been perfectly pure. When he succeeded thereby in lashing her conscience into torment, he would come with his panacea: "Elsa must enter the cloister." That this would almost break the heart of both father and daughter, the selfish woman soon managed to get over. But how could she persuade her daughter here among strangers to take the step, when even at home she had constantly refused, and was confirmed in her refusal by her dying brother?

"Leave that entirely to the abbess. Tell her today that you will place your daughter entirely in her hands. After that she will have no difficulty in imparting to her a holy disposition that spurns the world, and willingly, yea, joyfully, Elsa will take the veil." The mother was glad to be shown the way out, and did as she was suggested. In this wonderful city, time did not hang heavy on the hands of Miss Elsa. Being endowed with a sense of beauty, she could scarcely see enough of the glorious buildings and the still more glorious ruins of the old imperial city. Full of reverence, she also stood by the graves of the apostles and of the other saints; but she did not

seek her peace of soul there, as her mother did. This she found in the simple word of the Gospel which old master Smid had made known to her: "Give up all else and depend entirely upon the Lord Jesus." When now the priest and the abbess again began to speak of the blessedness of convent life, it produced even less of an impression than had been the case at home. She had heard and seen in the nunnery many things which did not raise her regard for the holy life.

This was still more the case with Dortie. Naturally she could not long be at ease within the dark convent walls. The many shrines, filled with a mysterious twilight, were little to her liking. Fortunately her superiors did not insist on her going along Therefore she used much of her leisure in wandering around in the neighborhood and making acquaintances. She cautiously gave the German tavern, in which Younker Kurt had taken lodging, a wide berth. On the other hand, she soon became acquainted with a German woman, a huckster, who often came to the convent with her baskets. A Tyrolese by birth, she had drifted to Rome a few years ago, where she married an Italian. Her husband kept a little inn in addition, and as Dortie soon made herself useful and, moreover, attracted customers by her beautiful form and her wealth of blond hair, she was gladly kept. Thus she found a place that pleased her ten times better than the convent. When Madam von Uhlenhorst, by special grace, had the high honor of kissing the foot of his Holiness the pope, and to receive his blessing, she was ready for the homeward journey. A few days before, her daughter had been invited by the abbess to see a dying nun, who had a special reputation for holiness. The mother, instructed by the priest, excused herself with being tired, and remained in her room. Dortie wanted to go along, but was detained by the madam, who demanded some small service. From that time Miss Elsa was not seen again and Dortie was very much distressed. The priest said that she had been so overpowered by the

holiness of a dying sister that she asked the special privilege of remaining with her.

"I do not believe that," cried Dortie; but a slap on the mouth by her mistress silenced her. On the following morning the priest brought this letter:

"DEAREST MOTHER: At last the scales have fallen from my eyes. I have finally come to see how good your intentions toward me were. The dying nun, who met death with smiles upon her lips and uplifted hands, has conquered my carnal heart. I am going to become a bride of heaven. My love for Hans I will sacrifice to the Savior as a bridal gift. That I shall not see you and Dortie again, shall be my first penance, my first step on the ladder to heaven. My prayers will benefit you more than my company. Greet my father for the last time in this world and say to Dortie that she must not grieve for me.

Farewell, farewell forever!

I have died to the world, that I might live for heaven."

"Miss Elsa never wrote that," cried the girl, violently weeping; but her mistress slapped her still harder on the mouth, and the priest said with unction:

"You silly child, who then could have written it? You can read yourself; look and see whether this is not the handwriting of the young lady herself."

It really did appear like the handwriting of the young mistress.

Dortie was just about to shout:

"Then they gave my poor lady a magic drink, or they compelled her to write the letter," but this time she clenched her teeth before the hasty words escaped her mouth. She wept bitterly, while her thoughts were all in confusion. Suddenly she arose, ran out and slipped through the long halls of the convent, which she already knew very well, rapped at every locked door, and spoke the name of her beloved lady. Of course, she did not get very far: the priest had followed her and led her back by force. She was seriously warned not to disturb the peace of the convent again in this way, and apparently she submitted to the inevitable. But at her first op-

portunity she slipped over to her German friend, the huckster, and whispered into her ears:

"They have locked my young lady up in the nunnery. Her mother and the priest are determined to make a nun of her. We journey tomorrow, but I will come back. I will not forsake my young mistress. May I then stay with you?"

"We will gladly receive you; my husband says that he has much more trade since the blond German girl helps him now and then in the tavern. Also in my business I can make good use of you. I am becoming somewhat corpulent, and cannot well carry the heavy baskets. And, most likely, I can be of service to you in getting into communication with your young mistress. I have my special friends in the nunnery, to whom I occasionally slip some sweet fruit. Is your young mistress perhaps a rich heiress that they are determined to put her into the cloister by force? Priests often do that in this country."

That was a new revelation to Dortie. Hitherto she had considered the mother the real perpetrator of this act of violence. She knew of her mistress and fully understood why she was so eager that her daughter should enter the cloister. Now she saw that, most likely, the priest was the real cause. All the more she was confirmed in her resolution to try everything to liberate her mistress.

"She is a very rich heiress," she accordingly answered, "and if you will help me to free her, she may sometime repay you richly. But can you not furnish me with some paper and a pen, that I may write a few words to my poor lady?"

"You can write, like a scholar?" Mrs. Mignotti exclaimed, greatly astonished. Then I know already how I can help you. No doubt, they have penned your lady in the subterranean penance chamber, where the nuns guilty of violation of rules are scourged. No cry ascends from there; but the fat cook, who every morning brings these prisoners bread and water, shov-

ing it through a small hole, is my intimate friend. She will at once take a note to your mistress."

"Thank God!" said Dortie.

"But now see that I get writing-material."

That was not such an easy matter, for Mr. Mignotti had to be taken into their confidence first; but he at length secured the materials. Dortie sat down to the hard work of writing, while Mr. and Mrs. Mignotti stood by, astonished at Dortie's scholarship. In large, stiff letters she drew the words upon a slip of paper.

"Tomorrow we start; but be unconcerned. I will return at once, and Peter Lange shall tell the matter to father and Younker Hans. He will certainly get you out of the nunnery if I do not.—Dortie."

Dortie wiped the sweat from her face and said:

"Can you manage to get the note there today yet? this is the third day since the poor young lady disappeared. She will certainly die of fear."

"This afternoon I am going to take fruit to the convent. Your mistress shall have your letter at the latest early tomorrow morning."

"Can you really tell me then before evening whether my mistress is sitting in the black hole?"

"Certainly, I can find that out from the garrulous cook. She is always happy when I bring her news of the world, and tells me much about convent life."

Dortie now cut another little note from the precious paper with her knife and wrote a letter to her sweetheart, which, however, was not a love-letter:

"DEAR HINNARK: — By force they have put Miss Elsa into the convent. I am going to run away and will remain in Rome with the tavern-keeper and fruit-dealer Mignotti, not far from the convent. Have already written Miss Elsa not to concern herself, because Younker Hans certainly will get her out. The convent cook will get my letter to her. Come soon!

YOUR DORTIE."

"P. S. — Younker Kurt followed us, but he will not get your lady."

This letter she hid in her waist, whereupon she hastened back to the nunnery.

In the afternoon she returned, and learned definitely that her mistress really had been put into the penitential cell, but, also, that the cook had willingly accepted the commission to act as messenger. Dortie returned home much relieved. On the next day, she passed out of the gate so quietly that Madam von Uhlenhorst, whose maternal heart was, after all, somewhat touched, was very much surprised. She expected many tears and reproaches from this impetuous girl, whose whole heart clung to her young mistress. So she now said with unaccustomed tenderness:

"Since you are so sensible, Dortie, you may ride Elsa's palfrey. I present him to you as a keepsake; for I know that you love your young mistress."

This, of course, set free the stream of tears so far checked by force of will, but otherwise she remained dumb. The servants also rode along speechless. That their dear young lady should enter the convent, and the whole estate should become an appanage of the cloister, was to them an unwelcome thought.

On the evening of the first day of the journey, Dortie stealthily went into the horse-stable, found Peter Lange, and whispered into his ears:

"By force they have penned Miss Elsa into a dark hole; I know this for certain through the old cook. It was not the fault of the mother, but of the miserable priest. They want to get the fine estate for their order. I now believe that the priest forged that farewell letter of our young lady. But I have already written to our poor Elsa not to be concerned at all. I am going to return tomorrow morning and stay with the German huckster woman. Here is a note to Hinnark. You must hide it in your clothes, so that the priest gets absolutely no knowledge of it. If, on the journey, you come across German soldiers, give it to a trustworthy man, preferably a Lutheran, that he may send it on. Probably I myself can contrive something to help our poor lady."

With open mouth the servant stared at the girl; in his thick head such thoughts assumed shape very slowly. Finally he said:

"I would never believe that our young lady would enter the convent. She is already half way Lutheran. But, Dortie, how can you undertake this long return journey by yourself, and stay in the large, strange city. The robbers might catch you."

"I would have gone afoot; but now, that our gracious lady has presented to me this beautiful horse, I shall get there much quicker. The horse may come handy sometime for Miss Elsa."

"But why did you not stay in Rome in the first place?" asked Peter, who was seriously concerned about her.

"In order that they might hunt me up at once, and then force me to journey home? Now they will hardly know what has become of me, and they will scarcely return. Do not be concerned about me! The dear Lord will help me because I am about to help my poor mistress. When you get home, be sure to tell our master what I have told you. At that time the lady will not be able to harm you any more. Perhaps the old gentleman, too, might help, even though I do not greatly depend upon him; the woman and the priest get him around. Give my greetings to Uncle Smid and all his family, also to all friends and acquaintances. Now I must get into the house, lest the lynx-eyed priest miss me. Farewell, Peter."

"Dortie, Dortie," said the old servant, wiping a tears out of his eye, "I wish that I could take your place; shall we ever see you again?"

Dortie's heart, too, was heavy at the thought of home, which, together with the old servant, appeared to vanish. But courageously she suppressed her tears, while Peter Lange ripped a seam of his jacket. Out of it he drew a gold coin, which he gave to the girl, and said:

"Here, Dortie, Younker Ulrich gave me this before his death. That is my contribution toward sav-

ing Miss Elsa, for whom you are risking life and limb." Then he hid the note in the same place. The same evening he sewed it up and took his departure. On the next morning he wanted to get the horse ready for Dortie, but she said:

"Feed him early, and then retire again, that you may honestly say that you did not see anything of me; I can get on all right."

With this she took leave and went into the inn. Early the next morning she crept into the stable, saddled her horse, and silently rode back to her young mistress. Her breakfast she had already taken in the kitchen; from the cook she had begged a loaf of bread. In consequence she was of good cheer, even though her heart beat audibly at the thought of going out alone into the world for the first time. The street was rather full of people. All looked with surprise at the blond woman, pursuing her way unattended; but no one ventured to approach her. Intentionally she did not enter into a conversation with anybody. The few scraps of Italian that she spoke would, in any event, soon have betrayed the stranger. At noon she gave her horse a drink at the creek; she herself took a few deep draughts likewise, and, after eating her bread with a good appetite, she hastened on. Already in the afternoon she saw the pinnacle and towers of Rome from a distance and thanked God for her little horse. Afoot she could not have gone so far. When, near the portals of the city, a crowd of suspicious-looking men came along, who made an attempt to halt her, she galloped through them, and before evening she had safely reached her old friend.

"That's sensible that you at least took this fine horse from the miserable woman who sacrificed her only daughter," she joyfully exclaimed.

"She gave it to me; for I should never have dreamed of taking it," said the honest German girl.

"Certainly, certainly, my little dove," laughingly joined the light-hearted Southron; that's all the same

to me. With our growing trade we can make good use of the little horse; and if your mistress should ever escape from the convent, she can quickly get out of the city on it. But come in quickly; you certainly are tired and hungry. Besides, I have something new to tell you about your young mistress. The knight, who came with you and still stays in the German tavern, wishes to liberate your mistress."

"Rather than allow herself to be liberated by him, she will stay in the convent!" Dortie replied vehemently.

"Gently, gently, my child. He is a fine man and the penitent cell is no agreeable place. I will bet ten to one: she will willingly permit herself to be liberated. The only misgiving I have is that success in getting her out is questionable. Here in Rome, where the pope rules, this is no small matter; at least it will cost much money."

"Which he does not have," said Dortie, relieved. She would rather wait for years for Younker Hans and her Hinnark than to have this contemptible rascal make her young mistress miserable.

In the meantime her young mistress had lived through frightful hours. The abbess really had deceived the girl. Following her into a cell, she saw a nun, apparently dying and looking at the ceiling with ecstatic eyes, without moving a member. Only now and then she whispered softly words such as these:

"A bride of heaven, a virgin led to the Lamb of God.—I see him, my beloved, as he sits at the right hand of God and beckons to me. O my Savior, how I thank Thee that Thou hast led me out of the wicked world into this quiet convent, which my carnal mind so much dreaded. Oh, come soon and take Thy bride!"

Miss Elsa, who in her honest heart had no inkling that all this was gotten up for the sole purpose of winning a rich noblewoman for the convent, was deeply moved, and answered the questions of the abbess whether she, too, would not like sometime to die in such happiness with a low "yes." But when the

abbess urged her not to consult with flesh and blood any longer, but to enter the convent at once, the thought passed through her mind that this was possibly a performance gotten up by the priest to take her by surprise. Embarrassed, she answered that she had no desire whatever for convent life.

"Did you not just now say that you would like sometime to die in such happiness? How, then, do you expect to give an account to God, save as a nun?"

"Through my Lord Jesus Christ."

Shocked, the fanatical abbess looked at the young woman, made the sign of the cross, and said with a piercing voice, quite out of harmony with a death-chamber:

"Have you, young as you are, been infected with the Lutheran heresy, which is said to be spreading like a pest throughout Germany? Do you, like that perjured monk, despise the highest holiness on earth, found in the cloister? Then, of course, you will not be ready for a long time to take the veil. Follow me!"

Miss Elsa thought that she would be led back to her mother. Moreover, she had passed through so many halls as she climbed and descended one stairway after another on the way to the sick-room that she could not find the way back by herself. Notwithstanding, she observed that their way led them even more downward than before, so that she began to be afraid.

"Where are you leading me?" she finally asked, standing still.

"Only a few steps yet, and we shall have reached the goal."

The young woman, with hesitating feet, went down one more stairway, which was almost entirely dark. Then her leader opened a heavy door and invited her to step in first. Filled with evil forebodings, Miss Elsa took a step backward. The uncanny room before her, illuminated by one feeble taper, had no furniture save a wooden couch for sleeping. Some pictures of the saints and a crucifix

hung on the wall. Among these hung a heavy scourge, whose thongs had been reddened by blood.

"I will not go any farther," said the young woman trembling.

"Then fly!" replied the abbess with mocking voice.

At the same moment the girl was pushed so forcibly in the back by two strong nuns who had been hidden in the hall that she literally flew into the cell and fell on the hard floor, while the heavy door swung into the lock. She shrieked aloud with terror and pain. The abbess, however, opening a small door in the wall, said:

"You might as well stop your crying, as nobody can hear it. When the taper is consumed, you must sit in the dark until you have become quiet. Then the little window up in the wall can be opened. Your mother has given you entirely into my power to make a nun of you. We shall soon drive your Lutheran heresies out of you. Your people do not wish to see you again; they are journeying home. Beseech our Woman of Sorrows that she may intercede for you with her Son, to implore pardon for your stubbornness, your heresy, and your disobedience toward your parents."

The little sliding-door was locked, and the poor prisoner was alone. Unable to control herself, she cast herself upon the couch and cried as if her heart would break. Sobbing, screaming, in fragments, the words came across her lips:

"Cast into this horrible dungeon, and this by my own mother! But no, my mother could not have intended this! The priest alone is to blame! For this he has dragged me into this strange land. Now I see clearly that what he wants is my inheritance. Now I also know that the pious death of that nun was merely a comedy. Oh, what an abyss of wickedness is surrounding me! And no help in sight!"

For a moment she thought of Dortie as a possible liberator; but what could the young girl accomplish

in a city where she did not even understand the language? She would have to go home with the others. Neither did the thought of Younker Kurt give her even momentary relief. If he would rescue her, he would do it only for purposes of his own. In despair she wrung her hands, till her weeping eyes rested on the crucified One. She sank upon her knees before the crucifix, raised her folded hands, and cried in deepest distress:

"Lord, have mercy upon me! I believe that Thou hast had mercy upon my spiritual distress; have mercy also upon my bodily distress! How can I become a nun with a lie upon my lips? How can I vow at no time to entertain a fond thought toward any man when my whole heart goes out to my Hans?"

The little taper in the meantime had burned out. Then, still on her knees, she cried:

"Lord, my Savior, let me not perish in the night of despair! Let me not lose faith in Thee and Thy grace!"

After languishing for a while in dreadful darkness, she heard a slight noise. Looking up, she noticed that a shutter was withdrawn high up on the wall, permitting a slender gleam of light to pass through a small, barred window. That quieted her somewhat. She concluded that it was not the intention to kill her in this cell. Of course, the day appeared endlessly long, and the following night even longer, for her eyes did not close a moment in sleep. In her unutterable grief she did not even once reflect that she had not taken food or drink since the morning before. But when, at the appearance of the twilight which the new morning brought to her cell, the sliding-door in the wall was pushed back, and a piece of bread and a pitcher of water appeared, she eagerly took the pitcher and quenched her thirst, whereupon she even ate a morsel of bread. A question put to the woman acting as turnkey remained unanswered. There was still a faint hope in her that the Lord would so direct the heart of her mother that she would not journey

without her daughter. But when the second day passed without any sign of life from her people, the night of despair enwrapped her soul. At last, exhausted in body and soul, she could say nothing but this one thing:

"Lord, if it be Thy will, let this be my last sleep in this world, and may I awake with Thee in heaven!" And the Lord, who adapts His trials to men's powers of endurance, heard her prayer according to His ever-gracious will, and sent her a long, refreshing sleep. Naturally the dreadful events of the last days followed her even into her dreams; but just when, in her deepest distress, she was crying for relief, Hans appeared before her eyes, sitting upon his charger and surrounded by a body of German soldiers. She saw him riding to the walls of the convent, bursting its doors, and demanding from the abbess the key for the dungeon of his loved one. She leaped from her severe couch of boards and hastened to the door. Hearing a noise, she shouted and stretched forth her arms to receive her lover. Then she saw her bread and water shoved through the opening, which made her realize that she had been dreaming. Full of bitter disappointment, weeping, she sank back upon her couch. Notwithstanding, she gradually found joy and comfort in her beautiful dream. Had not God sent it to her to save her from despair? Did He not hear her prayer yesterday evening, and send her a long, refreshing sleep, for which she had even failed to thank Him?

With this she sank upon her knees before the crucifix, and the first prayer of thanksgiving in the cell did much to relieve her heart. Comforted she arose, drank of the fresh water and helped herself to the fresh bread. But when she attempted to break off a little piece, it suddenly broke in two, and a little piece of paper flitted to the floor. Filled with happy anticipation, she picked it up, raised it to her eyes and tried to read the script. Fortunately Dortie had made very large letters, so that finally, in spite of

the twilight, the prisoner could read the comforting words of the faithful girl. The message was not so beautiful as the preceding dream, but it was real. Overwhelmed, the girl again cast herself upon her knees before the crucifix, and her lips overflowed with praise and thanksgiving toward her faithful God, who had not entirely forsaken her. Was this not already the beginning of the fulfillment of her dream? Come what might, however long help and rescue might delay, she would no longer despair; for she was not forsaken either by God or men.

She was very much depressed by the thought that on this very morning her mother was starting homeward. She strained every nerve to listen, and when she thought that she heard a thud as of trampling horses, she again commenced to weep bitterly. But despair had left her: she pressed the precious note of Dortie to her heart, hid it in her bosom, and commended herself again to the mercy of God.

Younker Kurt's expectation was realized. He saw Madame von Uhlenhorst riding homeward without her daughter. He deliberated for a long time whether he should not play his highest trump then and there, and charge the lady with her relation to the gallant Father Benedict, although such a charge was based on suspicion rather than on knowledge. But his common sense told him that the priest rather than the mother was the author of the crime, and that here, in the land of strangers, a scandal would have little effect upon the woman. Above all, a layman, in the pope's own city, could hope to accomplish very little against a priest, especially when he promised the church a rich treasure. Therefore he devised another plan.

When Dortie comforted herself with the thought that the younker had no money and, therefore, could do nothing, her conclusions were perfectly correct. What at one time the Numidian king, Jugurtha, said about old Republican Rome: "The whole city could be bought, if only a purchaser were found," was true also

of Papal Rome. Younker Kurt knew that, even before he had come to Rome. His few guilders had already disappeared during the journey. Through Caspar, however, he had discovered a new source of income. His good society manners had won him access to prominent families. He improved his opportunity by making diligent use of the loaded dice that he carried with him. With the large sums thus won he thought himself able to set the prisoner free. Nor were his hopes altogether unfounded, for in Rome a golden key would open almost any lock. He had already become acquainted with a high ecclesiastical dignitary, who spoke German, and who would surely set the prisoner free, if she were willing to be freed. He firmly believed that she was now entirely willing to do that. Certainly she would rather be at liberty, even alongside a man she did not love, than languish in a strange convent. Neither was it now solely the desire for the property that spurred him on to win her. Just on this last journey the mature beauty of Elsa had made a deep impression on him. Moreover, her conduct in the past had wounded his pride. She must become his, come what might!

It was remarkable that he found the same easy way to the prison as Dortie. The milk-woman who supplied the German inn went also to the convent. By a golden coin she was induced to become a go-between. The cook in the convent was won by a second gift, and on the morning following the reception of Dortie's letter the bread of the prisoner contained the following letter from Younker Kurt:

"MY DEAR COUSIN:—Mother-love has forsaken you, but my love to you cannot be conquered. I know that I am not worthy of you, for I have led a wild life. But I also know that you alone can save me as I alone can rescue you. Abundant means are at my command. I have acquaintances among the clergy. In this way I shall find means to get you out of the dreadful prison. Tear a piece out of this letter in the form of a heart and return it. That shall be

the answer that will liberate you and make me the happiest of mortals. Tomorrow the bearer of this letter will expect it again. Do not permit her and myself to wait in vain.

In faithful love,

Your Kurt."

When the prisoner with much effort had deciphered this letter in the semi-darkness, she sank down upon the couch, thoroughly broken. The temptation to get out of this dreadful hole was great, but the price at which her freedom was to be purchased was beyond her.

"My God, I thank Thee, that Dortie's letter arrived first; otherwise the decision would be still more difficult. But to enter upon marriage with a man unbeloved, while my heart belongs to another, would even be worse than to enter the convent with earthly love in my heart. My dear Savior will not forsake me."

When, on the next morning, Younker Kurt received his letter without the expected token, he was at first utterly stunned by disappointment; such constancy he did not expect. Soon, however, he became enraged, and, gnashing his teeth, he exclaimed:

"All this I owe to that milksop, Hans von Havenothing. If he were out of the way, I should have reached my goal. It is time to enter the imperial army. There I shall find him. If he does not fall through the hand of a Frenchman, he shall fall through mine."

CHAPTER VIII.

Sacco Di Roma.

AFTER the battle of Frankenhausen, Hinnark had requested his master to ride to Wittenberg, that he might get acquainted with Luther and his doctrine. But Younker Hans was rather inclined to go to Erfurt, where he desired to become acquainted with the humanists, the Mutians, of whom his father had told him. And he learned to know them to his own grief. It was not sorrow for sin that led these men, trained in Greek and Roman culture, to fight against the abuses of the church at that time, but the pride of reason. They fought against popery and monasticism, not with the two-edged sword of the Word of God, but with the weapons of human wit and sarcasm. At first they hailed Luther with delight; but when they recognized that his conscience was bound by the Word of God, they, disappointed, abandoned the movement led by him.

They even turned the weapons of their sarcasm against the Reformer and the true faith. The inexperienced mind of the younker could only be confirmed in his doubts by his association with these semi-pagan scholars. Ulrich von Hutten became his ideal more and more. This man was indeed highly gifted and inspired by a vehement desire for liberty. However, his moral level became steadily lower; he was fond of the lowest pleasures, and, forsaken by God and men, he ultimately died a miserable death.

It was very fortunate that his deep love for the noble Elsa von Uhlenhorst restrained Younker Hans from all wild excesses. At the same time he became prouder of his virtue and his own righteousness. The little that he learned of Luther's doctrine, therefore, did not appeal to him. In fact, it was distasteful. He did not believe that he needed a Savior from sin. Since his limited means did not permit him to

remain unemployed for a long time, he connected himself with a troop of soldiers which George Frundsberg was mustering for the emperor.

Emperor Maximilian was the real founder of the German Landsknechts — mercenaries, for whom the Swiss hired soldiers had served as type. Between these, for the most part fighting on the French side, and the German mercenaries there soon arose bitter envy. Maximilian freed the mercenaries from the useless burden of the shield. As their chief weapon he gave them a spear of ash wood, eighteen feet long and weighing seven pounds, also a short sword. The troop consisted of four hundred men, of whom twenty carried muskets, one hundred, halberds — an ancient Swiss weapon that was hatchet and spear in one—and the remainder, spears. Supported by heavy cannon, they would storm into the fray in solid ranks, thundering their battle cry. The clash was dreadful, inasmuch as the long spear proved even more destructive for the old knights in their coats of mail than the musket.

These mercenaries were a jolly set. The pride they took in their German blood did not prevent them from warring occasionally against the emperor; for they were soldiers by profession. If their wages were not forthcoming, they arose in rebellion; and when the war was ended, they went through the land begging and robbing. Nevertheless, these daring fellows were unusually popular. Their garments, tattered as they were, supplanted the insane fashions of the Middle Ages. Their daring and contempt for death sound forth from their songs at this late day, as the following fragment witnesses:

"Oh! when I shall lie dying,
Shot through on bloody heath,
On long spears they shall bear me
Down to the grave beneath.
However ill my dirge they'll play:
Nine times that noise is better
Than all the priestly bray."

With such a troop of German mercenaries, Hans and Hinnark, in the fall of 1525, arrived in Italy. How

differently everything might have turned out, had they surmised who was crossing the Alps with the next troop. However, they did not learn about it until later; consequently they could give themselves up to the happy soldier life with joyful minds. Younker Hans soon attracted the attention of his captain by his pluck, and, at the first opportunity, was made ensign. Hinnark was altogether in his element. Bubbling over with joy and the courage of youth, he was soon a favorite of the troop. He also made himself acquainted with the other troops as much as possible. Especially did he seek for associates from his own section. While he did not meet with success in this respect, one evening the sutler woman of the second troop accosted him as if she already knew him:

"Are you Hinnark Smid, from Uhlenhorst in the Luneburg country?"

Speechless, Hinnark stared at the woman, whom he had never seen, and whose speech, which he understood only with difficulty, proved that she came from a region a long distance from his own home.

"Are you not Hinnark Smid, and is your master not called Hans von Hasselbach?"

Greatly surprised, Hinnark leaped to his feet and exclaimed:

"Whence do you know me, Mother Marianne? Did you, on your trips, get as far as the Luneburg heath?"

"Is the sweetheart of your master called Elsa, and your own, Dortie?" Mrs. Marianne continued to ask, to be entirely sure.

His comrades laughed when Hinnark blushed at the last words, and one, laughing, shouted, while touching glasses with Hinnark:

"Say, fellow, you picked out a mighty fine girl; you seldom see such braids as hers."

Hinnark, of whom it could not generally be said that his tongue did not serve him well, was unable to answer. How could this troop, composed of Bavarians and Suabians, have such accurate knowledge of

himself and his sweetheart? Finally he exclaimed in confusion:

"Everything tallies, but where in all the world did you get the information?"

"These letters will tell you."

With these words Mrs. Marianne drew from her waist two very much crumpled letters, and gave them to Hinnark, who still stood as one stunned.

On the smaller his own name was written in large, stiff letters. Trembling from excitement, he opened it, and read the following words:

"My Dear Hinnark: — The priest says that the gracious lady can get forgiveness of sins only in Rome; so Miss Elsa and myself will also get to see the world. I can already ride horseback very well; but I prefer to sit in the wagon with Mother Marianne, who is very good at telling stories. I hope that we shall meet somewhere in Italy. We intend staying several weeks in Rome. Everybody is well at home. Those five acres have been duly transferred to you. So you can come home soon.

With many greetings,

Your Dortie."

"P. S. — Writing is still harder work than riding; mother Marianne can tell you everything about us much better."

This the woman sutler did most thoroughly, but not at once. Much as the soul of good Hinnark burned to hear about his sweetheart, love and duty drove him first to his master. He arrived out of breath and, still panting, he said:

"Here is a letter from Miss Elsa; and I also got one from Dortie."

The younker was fairly stunned, just as his squire had been a short time before, but he did not lose as much time asking questions. He snatched the letter from the hand of Hinnark and read the words of his dear one.

"My Dearest: — Brother Ulrich died peaceably in the faith of his Savior, and he begged our parents before his end not to trouble me any longer about the convent, but to add their blessing to our union. Father seems to be willing, but mother is still in distress of soul, and is now on a pilgrimage to Rome, accompanied by the priest and another

monk, and two servants. I had to go along. The hope that I might somewhere meet you in the South made the long journey easy for me. Ah, if one could only peer a little into what is hidden. Probably you are very near me, and we do not even know it. Do not stay too long out in the world if we do not soon meet, but come home soon to your,

EVER LOVING ELSA."

Younker Hans kissed the writing of his beloved; presently, however, he plunged so deeply into meditation that Hinnark, whom nothing would have suited better than turning a somersault, was at a loss to understand him. Finally he ventured to ask:

"Does the letter bring bad news?"

"No, no!" exclaimed his master, jumping to his feet, "the letter contains only what is welcome and good; but I read evil between the lines. Why did the mother take the daughter on this journey? I fear priestly deception and cunning. If my dear one enters the convent, the whole inheritance will pass to the order. She will never enter willingly; but many a person has passed from ken in Rome. Oh, if only my sweetheart were as poor as I am, we should soon be united. Whence did you get the letters?"

"The sutler woman of the newly arrived company brought them along."

"Do you know when the pilgrims left the mercenaries?"

"No, I was in such haste to get the letter to you that I did not ask further questions."

"Come, we must learn the particulars. I would prefer at once to go to Rome, if only I knew whether they are still there?"

In the tent of the sutler woman there was an animated asking and answering of questions, but the knight was not reassured. The pilgrims had separated themselves from the troops already several weeks ago, and, most likely, they were already on the home journey, the rough season of the year having arrived in the Alps. It would have been madness now to give up such a fine position in the army and to ride around in the world at random. If Miss Elsa was

successfully making her way homeward, all was well; but if, as he feared, she had been locked up in the convent, even a journey to Rome could be of no advantage. In which of the many cloisters of Rome would she be, and how could he gain admittance at all to a cloister in the city ruled over by the pope? The only possibility of meeting success in this respect could be afforded by an assault on Rome in the prospective war. He longed for this: in view of the hatred of the Italians against everything German and imperial, this possibility might very soon materialize. Naturally this experience was not calculated to cure him of his unbelief. Could a righteous God tolerate such baseness? In fact, was there a God at all? Thus he asked, as many another doubter had asked before him in his pride of reason. His sinister mood and doubt did not vanish when, one beautiful summer day, another crowd of soldiers arrived and joined the little garrison of Pavia, where they just then found themselves. To his boundless astonishment, he saw among the garrison Younker Kurt as ensign and his squire Caspar. This caused Younker Hans to shudder as if suddenly a venomous snake had reared before him. How did his enemy and rival ever come to Italy, and especially into this division of the army? This was more than a mere coincidence. It confirmed him, however, in his suspicion that Miss Elsa had not returned home, and that his enemy was searching for her.

His suspicions were soon to be confirmed, more thoroughly even than he had expected. Hinnark had soon sought the acquaintance of the sutler woman of the new troop, endeavoring to find out how and when Younker Kurt had become a member. He learned that the younker had joined them quite recently, with a mob of men who rather resembled a band of robbers. In view of the small size of his own troop the captain accepted him, especially as Kurt paid his men himself.

When Hinnark arrived with the message, his master said:

"Eyes open! is the word. Kurt is capable of leading a robber band; for only in this way can he pay his men."

In the city there were taverns enough, so that the sutler woman did not have the run of customers that she had in camp. But on the next evening Hinnark accosted her again, to get more details, if possible. As a precaution, however, he took two of his best comrades with him. Having received valuable information from a sutler woman once before, luck might favor him again. And it did. The sutler asked the names of the officers of the little troop, and when the name of the ensign, Hans von Hasselbach, was mentioned, she quickly inquired, with a look of gratification:

"Do you know him well?"

"Certainly, he is my master," answered Hinnark, filled with joyful expectation. "Have you any news for him?"

"Then it is even true that you are Hinnark Smid?"

"I am; have you a note for me from Dortie?" shouted Hinnark as he leaped to his feet.

"I have; but the old servant Peter Lange, who gave it to me several months ago, said that both you and your master would give me a good tip for my messenger service."

"That shall not be lacking," cried Hinnark, pulling out the largest silver coin that he owned. "My master will reward you even better. Where is the letter?"

The woman smiled and pocketed the money, at the same time disclosing Dortie's note.

Hinnark glanced over it and exclaimed in anger:

"This bunch of priests! My master's forebodings were justified after all. It is good that we now know where we are."

Saying this, he suddenly turned around, in order

to take the important message to his master. On that occasion he bumped very hard against a man, who during his last words had quietly come into the tent, without being noticed by those present. Hinnark was about to excuse himself, when he recognized the red beard and the evil eyes of Caspar. Quick as lightning the thought came to him that this scoundrel had overheard his words and brought about the collision on purpose. At the same time he observed a half dozen nondescript persons crowding the entrance, saw the fist of Caspar raised for a blow, and heard him yell:

"Take that for your knavery!"

Not to be outdone, Hinnark raised his own fist and struck his opponent's forearm from below, so that Caspar could not suppress a cry of pain. At the same time he succeeded in dodging a blow aimed at his head. Simultaneously he made the discovery that his opponent was trying to snatch the letter out of his hand. Fortunately, in the excitement he had held it as in a vise, so that Caspar merely tore off the piece containing Dortie's name. Now Hinnark understood fully the design of the red scoundrel. Leaping far back into the tent, he hid the precious letter in his jacket, and then drew his sword. It was high time, for all the reprobates in front had already bared their swords.

"This is a Roman spy, a traitor," Caspar yelled. "Take the traitorous letter away from him; kill him, the dog!"

In a second, a savage encounter took place. There were three against seven; and Caspar, who, intent upon Hinnark's death, had sneaked after him when he saw him going to the sutler's tent, thought he would have an easy victory. If there should be an investigation, he could lie himself out of it. Did Hinnark not bump against him first? However, Hinnark had been in the habit of engaging in daily sword practice with his master. Also, he was much stronger physically than the dissolute Caspar. Parrying the

first blow of his opponent, he returned a powerful lunge. Caspar attempted to ward it off, but his aching wrist was not a match for the savage force of the smith. Receiving a heavy blow on the head, he staggered back. This, however, was offset in a measure by Hinnark receiving a cut in the left shoulder at the same moment. Moreover, the odds being six to three, the issue of the battle was still very doubtful.

The sutler woman had in the meantime crept away by lifting the rear wall of her tent. Screaming, she ran through the streets of the camp. The shouts of the combatants, too, attracted a number of curious people. One of the first who heard them was Younker Hans. The first thought that struck him was that his squire was in danger of being overpowered, and with longs leaps he hastened to the place of conflict. His voice and his good sword soon restored quiet. When he ascertained the cause of the strife and read the note, he said to the provost guard, which meanwhile had made its appearance.

"That red rascal who started this bout has received his dose; permit him to go with his band."

Those who made the attack, conscious of being in the wrong, were glad to get off so easily, and left with their wounded leader.

When Younker Hans read the note again, he said to his squire:

"Your Dortie is a jewel; now we know at least where to find the lost ones, even if we do not know when and how. I should prefer to start today in order to liberate my poor sweetheart; but what can a solitary man in Rome accomplish against a convent. I must take my old captain into my confidence. It would be well for him to know that a band of murderers are in camp. Until your wound heals we cannot journey at any rate." The captain who esteemed his young ensign very highly, shook his gray head at Hans' project, and said:

"I have heard about Younker Kurt and his jailbirds. I should not have admitted this band to my

company. Since the Emperor does not pay our hire, the soldiers are uneasy enough as it is. Still, if that fellow becomes too saucy here, the provost will make short work of him. But if he really seeks your life he will at once follow you when you go to Rome. His squire has now learned that you know the prison of your sweetheart, and they will keep their eyes upon you. I can give better advice. It has been reported that the pope has released King Francis from his oath. That surely means that the whole army will march upon Rome. That will be your chance. If you do not care to wait so long, Colonna will probably give you the opportunity to make your way into the Eternal City. He has gotten into a fierce fight with the pope and is hiring soldiers; the blows may soon fall. Of course, in that case you will have to go on your way by yourself, while, in our camp, you are safer than on the outside. You are sure that Miss Elsa will not willingly follow that Uhlenhorst fellow; therefore I advise that you wait till the whole army marches upon Rome; then you may storm every cloister."

Younker Hans saw that the advice was good; but the thought of the misery of his dear one tormented him. Rather than to look upon her misery and do nothing, he preferred to run the utmost risk. He would wait long enough for Hinnark to recover, then ride south and join the troops of Cardinal Colonna. One day he learned that Younker Kurt and his band had disappeared in the middle of the night. Now nothing could detain him any longer. Surely, his rival would also join the forces of Colonna and eventually abduct Miss Elsa. Even his captain could now no longer hold him, however hard he tried it.

"If you are determined to depart," he said at parting, go in the name of God; but I will keep your place open. If you remain unscathed, come back to us. I will do even more. I know that you are not blessed with this world's goods; but in such an undertaking a well-filled purse is always the surest weapon.

Without murmuring, you have dispensed with your wages for months; also, you were always very economical. Therefore I will once more turn the regimental treasury upside down in order to pay you and your squire your back wages."

Younker Hans thanked his captain heartily for everything, and since Hinnark was by that time so far restored that he could sit on a horse, both of them, early in the next morning, rode southward, with their full wages in their pockets. At the very first inn they came upon traces of Kurt and his band. With greatest caution they proceeded, especially when the way led through forests or ravines. They kept about a full day's journey behind Kurt's band, and in this way they came rapidly and unmolested into the vicinity of Rome. With a heart swelling with longing, Younker Hans on the next morning mounted his horse already before daybreak in order to reach the Eternal City before evening. He believed that Kurt did not suspect his coming at all; otherwise he would certainly have attacked him already. In good spirits, spurring his horse to a brisk trot, he rode through the dewy morning. Also Hinnark, who had now fully recovered from his wounds, was in his happiest mood. He was especially proud of his Dortie, who had with such cleverness taken the first steps to the rescue of her mistress. Both of these young men were, in consequence, so taken up with thoughts of their sweethearts that they rode into a forest-bordered defile, without paying very much attention to the road, although it was rather dark among the trees. Suddenly Hinnark's horse stumbled so severely that the rider was thrown out of the saddle. At the same moment at least a dozen wild forms, armed with swords and spears, pounced upon the two riders from the brush lining the road.

Had Younker Hans known that his enemy had for a long time been in league with Cardinal Colonna, that the former had gathered his band with the money of the latter and, at his call, was now hastening to

Rome, he certainly would have taken his good captain's advice. To avoid the suspicion of the pope, the cardinal, in the meantine, had sent Kurt northward, which was very acceptable to the latter, since it gave him an opportunity to settle his score with Hans. Of course, he soon learned that it was not such an easy matter to kill his cautious rival while he was with his own men. But his Caspar had brought him the fragment of paper with Dortie's name. It was clear to him then that Hans, by that time, knew the place of abode of his betrothed, and would surely at the first opportunity attempt her rescue. One of his vagabonds, left behind by him for the purpose of reconnaissance at the inn where they had spent their first night, announced to him the approach of his enemy; then his murderous plan was soon perfected Only he himself and Caspar had horses, neither did he have one of those heavy blunderbusses with him; for this reason he lay in ambush at that place. The daring of his two opponents was well known, and in order that he might not sacrifice too many of his men, he stretched a thin rope across the road; this, having been wound around the trees, was at once drawn tight when Hans and Hinnark came. It was this that had caused Hinnark's horse to stumble.

Fortunately the younker's horse was slightly behind that of Hinnark, so that he could stop the horse just in time. Hinnark, as luck would have it, fell upon the rope, which broke his heavy fall. Soon he was on his legs again. Had he at once jumped into the saddle, he could have anticipated the bandits; but he did not like to lose his spear, which had dropped out of his hand when he was jolted out of the saddle. But by the time he had recovered this and reached his horse, several of the rascals were already upon him. With a mighty thrust he drove his weapon through the coat of mail and breast of the nearest one, so that he fell over backward with a loud groan, taking the spear with him. Meanwhile the spear of the opponent had grazed the neck of Hinnark; the sword

of another struck him heavily on the helmet, and only with the help of his master was it possible for the squire to mount his horse.

Younker Hans, in the meantime, held the robbers at bay with tremendous blows. In vain his eyes sought his mortal foe. If he was to lose his life at the hands of these thugs, their captain should receive his last blow. But he did not see him, and when Hinnark had again vaulted in the saddle, he shouted to him:

"Come back, Hinnark, come out of the defile!"

In turning their horses they noticed two riders galloping toward them, and Younker Hans shouted to his squire:

"Here come the rascals. Pity that your spear is gone; seek to get by Caspar, and I will run down this hedgerider."

He did not know that Hinnark was bleeding profusely from several wounds and could scarcely keep in the saddle. He and Kurt still carried the knightly shield, which, at that time, was already rather rare in battle. The deadly enemies rode against each other at full gallop, and the collision was fearful. Younker Kurt's spear struck the shield of his opponent with such force that its point pierced it and the shaft of ash-wood splintered. Younker Hans attempted the harder but, at the same time, more dangerous thrust at the head of his opponent. Just above the edge of the shield he struck the iron helmet so that the point pierced it and glanced the skull of Kurt, who was barely able to maintain himself in the saddle. In spite of the nearness of the other robbers the victor was about to kill his opponent, the fierceness of conflict causing him to forget all caution, when a shout of fear from the lips of Hinnark caused him to look around.

Hinnark had successfully turned his horse about, but, in doing so, he had received additional wounds. He attempted to draw his sword, but suddenly his head became so heavy that he permitted his weapon

to fall back into the sheath, and in order not to fall down he flung his arms about the neck of his horse. He still had presence of mind enough to pull the horse to one side just before the collision, whereby Caspar's spear was deflected from his breast. Notwithstanding, he received a hard blow on the shoulder, which flung him out of the saddle.

The next moment Caspar, struck by the spear of Younker Hans, sank to the ground, but when the latter had assisted his squire into the saddle, it was the highest time to flee, for the whole band of robbers came now running toward them. The swift horses, however, soon brought their riders beyond the range of the pursuers, who, in view of their heavy losses had very little inclination to follow such a desperate opponent.

The two men had escaped just in the nick of time; for Younker Hans suddenly noticed that his squire, having become unconscious, was tottering in the saddle. After the knight had convinced himself that he enemies were no longer in pursuit, he tenderly lifted Hinnark from his horse, bound up his wounds as best he could, and gave him some wine. Hinnark opened his eyes, but presently, the swoon returning, closed them again. Looking around for help, the younker espied the hut of a vine-dresser, situated right in the vineyard. He laid the unconscious man under a tree and rode over to the vine-dresser's, who, induced by Hans' coin and kind words, kindly agreed to receive the injured man. With the help of the vine-dresser he succeeded in getting the deathly-sick man into the house and to lay him on a pallet of straw.

"I suppose that you fell into the hands of that band which passed here yesterday,—two horsemen and over a dozen footmen. They surely looked like bandits, and I had begun to fear for my wine cellar."

"Probably the same crowd," replied Younker Hans, who, by this time, could make himself moder-

ately well understood in the vernacular. "Do you know the rogues?"

"No; but they did not look like honest soldiers; I am surprised that they stay so long in this neighborhood."

"They have been waiting for me; they were bent, not upon robbery, but upon murder, for their leader and myself love the same girl."

"Your patron saint is evidently very gracious to you, in that you have escaped the whole band alive."

Younker Hans, too, had once believed in patron saints, but he did so no longer. He, too, once had believed in a gracious God; in his great distress his poor heart yearned for a Father in heaven, but his proud reason cried out, embittered: "There is no God, otherwise wickedness could not triumph."

He did not seem to consider that his heavenly Father in unmerited mercy had just then delivered him from the most imminent danger of death. But someone also thought of it—his poor Hinnark. While his master sat at his bedside in dumb despair he opened his eyes again, and when he saw that he was well cared for and his dear master sat unhurt at his side, he folded his hands feebly, and his lips began to move in prayer:

"I thank Thee, my dear Lord, that Thou didst not permit me to pass away in my sins. Give me time for repentance and confession of my guilt. How deeply have I sinned against Thee and my parents. Now my wounds burn and my tongue cleaves to the roof of my mouth. How dreadful must hell-fire be! Oh, if I only had the comfort in death which that Lutheran warrior had, who, in spite of all his sins, trusted only in the blood and wounds of Christ."

When his master made no reply, the sick man continued:

"Master, can you not see to it that I get a priest; I am sick unto death, yet I am very much afraid of death."

His master aroused himself from his sad thoughts and said with forced cheerfulness:

"Who would right away think of dying?" After a few weeks you will be in the saddle again. Just take courage!"

"Master, render me only this one service and have a priest called. Of course, I know that you no longer believe in God, heaven, or hell. But, face to face with death, I am certain that there is a righteous God, before whom I cannot prevail with my many sins. Or are you able to give me better comfort?"

His master was silent; for unbelief must always be silent face to face with death, having nothing to cling to. However, he asked the farmer whether he could not get a priest. The man was ready to do this without hesitation, especially since the village containing the parish church was not far away.

Hinnark also spoke some Italian; but it was very difficult for the simple priest to impart cheer to the sick man. He soon found that the usual consoling reference to the saints did not take hold upon the German. Therefore he finally said:

"Then trust altogether in our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Your Reverence," the sick man replied, "I would only like too well to do that; but is not that Luther's doctrine?"

"I only know about Luther that he is an arch-heretic; but this is the doctrine which the church that alone has the power to save has for me in the extremity of death. It has brought comfort to a great many of my parishioners, and I hope it will bring the same to you."

Thereupon the priest administered extreme unction and the body of the Lord to the sick man, in whom wound-fever was rapidly developing. Then he returned home, not without having received a rich gift from Younker Hans.

"Lord Jesus, have mercy upon me!" were the last intelligible words of the sick man; then he became delirious. Most of the time he seemed to be at home

with his parents, whom he asked for forgiveness over and over. Then he spoke of his Dortie, which gave his master a new idea. Turning to the farmer he asked:

"Do you ever get to Rome?"

"I drive there often with wine and fruit," answered the man.

"Do you know the inn-keeper and the fruit-dealer Mignotti?"

"I know him well; for he is one of my best customers."

Then the knight arose in happy excitement and said:

"I will pay you a goodly messenger fee if you will take a note to a German girl who is working for him."

To blond Dortie?" asked the farmer, now listening with great interest. "I saw that girl on my last trip. The roads are a little unsafe, as you have just experienced, but the bandits will scarcely attack a mere huckster. I will go early tomorrow morning." The thought of a gracious heavenly Father who so wonderfully interposed in his life, made a deep impression upon the unbelieving younker, already deeply impressed with his squire's troubles of conscience. But Younker Hans' hour of grace had not yet come. Suggesting blind chance as explanation, his proud intellect readily regained its former balance. "Otherwise God would necessarily have been the cause of the murderous attack, too, and of all the unrighteousness done to me by Kurt," he reasoned. "There is no God, no angels, no devil. My Elsa is my angel, and Kurt is my devil. On earth only the keen edge of reason rules, and the edge of the sword."

Of course, he was not happy with these cheerless thoughts, nor was his conscience so hardened that he did not feel the fallacy of his reasoning. But the thought that, at length, he had the opportunity to get into communication with his poor darling dispelled

all gloom. He got a paper and writing-material out of his saddle-bag, and wrote the following letter:

"My true, dear Love: — While on the way to rescue you we were attacked by Kurt and his bandits, and Hinnark was severely wounded. In all probability Rome will soon be stormed, but it will most likely be impossible for us to reach you at this time. But do not despair! The pope and the emperor are at war, and in the army there is already talk of marching upon Rome. I am an ensign in Pavia; my captain is very good to me. He thought my present venture a piece of bravado, but anxiety for you has robbed me of all rest since I learned your place of abode through Dortie's letter. As long as I breathe I will think upon your rescue. Give me some sign of life, even if it be only one single word. The man who delivers this letter will, if necessary, tarry in Rome several days. Oh, to be so near to you, and yet so far! That thought consumes my heart like fire.

Your Hans."

He closed the letter and sealed it with his ring. Then he wrote a second note to Dortie, in which he thanked her for her faithfulness and described the wounds of Hinnark as not necessarily fatal; also, he entreated her, if at all possible, to secure an answer from Miss Elsa. With these notes the farmer started out early the next morning upon his journey to Rome. Of his wine he took only a small cask, which, as expected, he had to surrender to the bandits, while they left him his greens. Just before the gates were closed, he entered the Eternal City.

After receiving Dortie's letter, Miss Elsa had quietly submitted to her lot. Her treatment soon became entirely different. They fairly outdid themselves in presenting convent life in its most favorable light. Every privilege was granted her but that of going outside. At her fervent request, Dortie was at length permitted to come to the convent. This was considered quite safe, for what could a poor girl, far from her German home, accomplish against the almighty church? She became quite composed when she learned that Kurt had departed. Father Anselm had informed the abbess of his intention. When Dortie came, there was an embracing and a weeping

just as though there were no difference in station between the young noblewoman and the poor girl. Ever cheerful, Dortie restored the courage of the poor prisoner. But when fall was approaching and there was still no sign of life from Hans and Hinnark, even Dortie herself began to doubt whether her note had reached the proper address. One day, as she sat sadly before the little store of Mignotti, a farmer drove up whom she had often seen there. She wanted to call the woman of the house, that she might buy the man's produce. But he signalled to her to keep silent, stepped closer, and said in a whisper:

"I have a letter for you from Younker Hans."

Wild for joy, she flung up her hands and, her wonted readiness of tongue notwithstanding, she could find no words, but stared at the messenger with open mouth, who presently drew forth two little letters. Now the spell was broken by a glad shout. She read her letter, and then hastened to the kitchen to Mrs. Mignotti, in order to transmit the other letter at once to its address by the usual method.

In the convent chapel the sisters were kneeling at vespers. Miss Elsa's heart was so heavy that she scarcely heard a word of the service; her soul was wrestling with God that He might save her from despair. Then she suddenly felt her hand touched by that of the person kneeling by her side. At the same time she noticed that the hand contained a note. Thrilled by glad expectation, she turned and recognized in the sister the old cook. Hastily she took the note, and, without attracting notice, concealed it upon her bosom. She divined from whom this letter was; her feet almost refused to carry her as she walked to her cell with the treasure. In the twilight of the chapel no one had observed the occurrence. By the last ray of light she read the letter of her lover, and the former darkness of her soul was dispelled as if by magic. She kissed the paper and, moistening it with tears, she read the note again and again, until she could scarcely see any longer. Then she meditated

a moment upon a possible method of making reply. Quickly resolved, she took a needle with which she had been embroidering an altar cloth, thrust it deep into her finger and, dipping the blunt end of the needle into her own blood, she wrote laboriously on the margin of the note:

"Forever yours,—Elsa."

With great care she tore off the margin with its crimson message and, at the next service, handed it to the cook, who gave it to Mrs. Mignotti on the following morning. On the evening of the third day, this note, together with a letter of Dortie to Hinnark, was in the hands of the overjoyed Younker Hans.

The warlike and ambitious Cardinal Colonna, who under Julius II. already had appealed to the Italian people to secure their liberty, like his Ghibelline ancestors before him, marched against Rome, which was hostile to the emperor, accompanied by other Italian dignitaries. Moncada, the representative of the emperor, had received command to support these gentlemen to the utmost. On his advice they made a mock-treaty with the pope, who really walked into the trap and dismissed his troops, except a few hundred men. In this way, on the twentieth of September, they surprised the enemy they had thus beguiled in an almost defenseless condition. Rome, which would not move a finger for the pope, witnessed a remorseless pillage, prophetic of the Sacco Di Roma, which was to take place the year after. Even the holy treasures of St. Peter's Church were not spared. Clement fled to the secure Castle of St. Angelo, and thought of defending himself with pike in hand. However, on the same evening, he negotiated with the imperial ambassador. With sanctimonious excuses the latter returned the stolen tiara and admonished the pope to make peace with the emperor, whose victorious arms God himself could not resist without punishment.

Impelled by curiosity, the Roman populace surged on the streets when the warriors of Colonna burst into

the city. Of course, under these circumstances our Dortie could not stay at home. But this time it was not mere curiosity which drove her among the multitude. She was looking for Younker Kurt and his Caspar. Her heart was heavy; for she was concerned about the life of her Hinnark. But this morning anxiety for her young mistress was supreme in her faithful heart. If Kurt should come into the city with the invaders, he could easily storm the convent and take Miss Elsa away by force. About her own safety the brave girl was not concerned at all.

Suddenly she was startled; something red gleamed through the multitude—the beard of Caspar. Now she also recognized Younker Kurt, who rode at the side of his squire, surrounded by a band of genuine bandits. Dortie could no longer stay with the throng; turning about, she rapidly forced her way through, till she came to the nearest alley, in which she disappeared.

But her very haste was to become fatal. There was a strong commotion in the multitude, which did not escape the lynx-eyes of Caspar. Now it was he that was startled; for by the blond braids and high form he recognized the girl as she departed in haste.

"They are already waiting for our coming," he shouted to his master, punctuating his words with uncouth laughter. "There Dortie Peters is running off." After a hasty glance at the girl, Younker Kurt shouted to two of his bandits:

"Pursue that girl; do not let her get out of your sight; you will lose nothing by it."

He permitted the other bandits to plunder to their hearts' content, while he rode as quickly as the horse would carry him to the convent with Caspar, where he confidently hoped to secure his prey this time.

But he arrived too late. Dortie had arrived at the gate of the convent a few minutes before him, quite breathless from her exertion. She was admitted at once; for she had been known for a long time.

In the presence of the abbess she told her blanched mistress what she had discovered. The abbess at first looked at the young woman with distrust, since she had persistently refused to take the veil. However, the abbess was soon quieted when Miss Elsa entreated:

"Save me from the ruffian!"

The din caused by the savage intruders penetrated the convent, usually so transquil. Presently mighty blows thundered against the portals; the trembling nuns gathered about the mother superior, who, pale but composed, was awaiting the breaking down of the strong portals. But the blows ceased and the janitress rushed in with the announcement:

"A German knight wishes to speak with you, Domina."

"All of you go to the chapel and beseech the saints for help, while I go and negotiate with the knight," the abbess said in a dignified way, and went out.

When she asked the knight through the peek-hole in the door what his desire was, he bowed with knightly courtesy and said:

"Honorable Domina, you hold Miss von Uhlenhorst in your convent as a prisoner; surrender her, and my company shall stand guard before your portal, so that no other troop may storm your convent."

"If you will give me your word of honor, Sir Knight, that you intend no act of violence, you may come in and inquire of Miss Elsa in person whether she is willing to follow you or not."

Younker Kurt gave his word of honor, commanded Caspar to retire a little distance with the horses, so that the abbess need not fear a sudden attack, and was admitted alone. The abbess locked the door, and led the knight into her own room, brought Miss Elsa in, and left the two alone. She herself slipped into the adjoining room and removed the covering from a very small hole in the door, through which she could observe the room. The two

rooms was so-called "whisper rooms," connected with each other by a vaulted ceiling, constructed for the particular purpose of enabling her to understand every word spoken. When Younker Kurt saw the maiden before him whom he had formerly sought especially for her wealth, real passion flamed up in his heart. She had grown paler, but this made her even more beautiful in his eyes. He had to restrain himself to keep from embracing that tall, supple form with its face of ravishing loveliness, so effectively contrasting with her somber garments. Succeeding in his effort, he made a deep bow and said:

"My love for you, honored cousin, has given me no rest. Through the fortunes of war I have become a rich man, so that your paternal inheritance is no longer an attraction to me. But you yourself—I swear it by my honor as a knight—have won my heart. Say that you will be mine and I will today yet lead you toward your dear home, for which your heart longs."

Tears filled the eyes of the maiden when she thought of her dear home, desire for which indeed fairly consumed her, as the astute Kurt had rightly surmised. Already he trusted that he could interpret her tears as favorable to him, when the maiden, sobbing, answered:

"I cannot, and you know why; my heart belongs to another."

Younker Kurt flushed with rage; yet he controlled himself and said with hypocritical sympathy:

"In case your are still thinking of Younker Hans von Hasselbach, I must convey to you a sad message. As I have reliably learned, he, together with his squire, was killed several weeks ago by bandits. He, likewise, wanted to ride hither to your rescue; but you will expect him in vain."

Fortunately the maid had received the note of her lover before this spurious death message. Therefore she was not frightened, as Knight Kurt had ex-

pected; steadily fixing her eye upon him till he lowered his, she said in a quiet voice:

"I do not believe the message."

Her first thought was to hurl the word "assassin" at him; but she changed her mind in time, lest the rogue should be goaded to even greater hate.

Now Younker Kurt pleaded that she might at least permit him to accompany her home; there she could then await the coming of Younker Hans and render her decision, free from constraint.

That would indeed have been a severe temptation, had she not known the knave to be an assassin. Therefore she remained firm and begged him to withdraw.

Then he began to threaten that he would storm the convent by force and liberate her against her will.

"Do what you must! I am in God's hand."

With these words the maiden turned away from him and went to the sisters in the chapel, where she sank into Dortie's arms in tears.

The younker rushed out after he called to the abbess:

"I go; but I shall return."

The abbess scarcely believed that Christian troops would storm the convent. Notwithstanding, she directed the younger sisters to pass into a subterranean hiding place through a secret door, and to take with them the treasures of the convent. Younker Kurt and his band, soon afterward, really did break into the convent, but found the nest empty. The abbess and her two grey-headed sisters could not be coerced, either by threats or ill treatment, to reveal the secret, and, with but small booty, the savage crowd finally left, to seek richer plunder elsewhere.

By coming to terms quickly, the pope preserved Rome from continued pillage. Already on the next day the savage commotion died down, and the Eternal City resumed its wonted aspect. On the evening of the same day Dortie wished to go over to Mignotti's again, but Miss Elsa restrained her:

"Do you not know that Kurt and Caspar are in the city? Once before they wished to abduct you, and they certainly have not improved since. Who knows what they would have done with me if they had gotten me into their power."

Dortie was unwilling to be restrained until the next day; however, she said to her mistress:

"My friends will be anxious about me; for they do not know where I am. News even might possible come from Younker Hans and Hinnark; and in that case I ought to be there. I will stay in the house as much as possible. Since Kurt and Caspar do not know where I work they will scarcely find me."

"But if they should find you nevertheless? You had better stay here a few days longer."

With flashing eyes, when the young woman had thus voiced her sentiments, Dortie drew Hinnark's dagger out of her waist, where of late she had always kept it. Then she said:

"It will not be such an easy matter for a bandit to overpower me. Mignotti is a strong man, an old soldier, who knows how to deal with such people. Be quite unconcerned about me; I am just as safe there as you are here in the convent. Should Caspar's red beard show up again, I shall be doubly cautious."

With this the courageous girl went back to Mignotti's, where she was received with joy; for they had been much concerned about her. At the first attack they had been obliged to dispense to the warriors a few buckets of wine; beyond that they had no complaints to make. On the next day, however, the demands upon them were all the greater. Dortie had all she could do, and their fears, which never had been grave, soon disappeared, since nothing unusual happened for a number of days in succession. She believed that Younker Kurt, after his futile suit, had left with the other hostile troops.

One evening, however, two suspicious fellows came to the inn. They were evidently astonished at something at the very outset, and, after taking a few

drinks, they left the inn. She told Mignotti about the men, and resolved to be especially cautious on that evening.

It was already late when a half dozen guests entered at the same time and demanded to be served at once. Demanding wine from the best keg, which was not tapped very often, they cast the money for it upon the table in advance, which compelled the innkeeper to go down to the cellar to fill the order. Scarcely had he disappeared through the vent-hole, when one of the men, with cat-like swiftness, crept behind Dortie, whom another had engaged in conversation. Suddenly she felt a heavy hand upon her mouth and another at her throat. Had she not been prepared for something of the kind the rascals would have overpowered her and dragged her away without even giving her a chance to scream. Quick as lightning, however, she pulled her knife out of her waist and plunged it into the hand of the bandit. With a loud oath he relinquished his hold upon her mouth and throat. She thrust her knife into the face of another, who was trying to block her way; bleeding, he staggered backward. With a few leaps she was at the kitchen door. Scarcely had she bolted it when one of the bandits threw himself against it.

The innkeeper, when he heard Dortie's first shriek, put down his decanter and seized an old blunderbuss, which he had owned ever since his soldier days. It always stood behind the door, loaded. With that the bandits did not care to get acquainted, especially since they could not hope, in any event, to get possession of the elusive maid in the darkness. Then they went away, only to be cursed dreadfully by Younker Kurt on account of their stupidity and cowardice. This was too much for the proud Italians, who still considered the Germans semi-barbarians. Now they began to rail, and the German younker considered himself lucky to get away unhurt from his crowd of bandits.

Since Dortie had immediately run to the convent

after the advent of the enemy, the spies sent out by the younker did not at once, but only after long search, discover her abode. Not being able to win the mistress, he would at least get the beautiful girl in his power. But when this trick also failed, the rascal withdrew from Rome. Since the pope was rather revengeful, the city was no safe place of refuge for an intimate friend of the Colonnas.

Meanwhile Dortie returned to the convent, where, after repeated knocking, she was admitted. Weeping, she sank into the arms of her young mistress; then both thanked God for their gracious preservation. During the following week Dortie patiently remained in the convent, until her desire for Hinnark drove her forth once more. Everything was quiet now; and one fine day the farmer, for whom the girl had been anxiously waiting, presented himself again.

"Is my Hinnark alive?" she shouted to him from afar.

Glad laughter was the answer; and when he laid his hand on his pocket, a glad shout came from Dortie's lips. She was soon privileged with trembling fingers to open a note from her lover. The contents were as follows:

"MY DEAR DORTIE: — God has helped me wonderfully. In a few days we shall return to the army, and I hope we shall soon come back and rescue you. How have you fared? I must even thank God for my severe wound; for in the anguish of death I have experienced what a comfort there is in Luther's doctrine, that we must trust in the blood and wounds of Jesus alone. Precisely as to my grandmother, the priest, when administering unction, said to me: 'Trust altogether in Jesus Christ.' That gave me peace. I know that, in spite of all my sins, I should have been saved. If only dear Hans, too, would believe that! He nursed me as if I had been his brother; but, alas, he no longer believes in a living God. He thinks that a God could not permit so much wrong. I firmly believe that everything will end well. Write again if you can. At least send word through the farmer. Cordially yours,

HINNARK SMID."

"P.S. — Do not tell Miss Elsa anything about my master's unbelief; it might grieve her."

In great haste Dortie now carried Younker Hans' letter to the convent, where by this time she had free access to her mistress. Both young hearts were now comforted, and could face the future quietly. They wrote short notes in reply, with which, a few days later, Hans and Hinnark rode back to Pavia. The serious lesson which the pope had received from the Colonnas and the frightful information of the destruction of the Hungarian army at Mohacs were imparted at the same time. Notwithstanding, the pope declared a treaty, which he had been forced to make, void, and, in spite of the promised amnesty, the pope repaid the treachery of the Colonnas with a relentless devastation of their estates.

"I would rather die than continue in such disgrace," exclaimed the passionate head of the church, breathing vengeance.

One could not think hard of the emperor for severely criticising the papal politics by saying, "If the pope acts not as a shepherd but as a burglar, an appeal to a General Council will become necessary."

Already in the summer of 1526 the question was discussed in the imperial court whether the German heretics should not be treated with greater leniency, so that in this way the strong aid of the realm against the pope and the French might be secured. This did not argue an intention of seriously espousing the Lutheran cause. But this was not at all necessary. The mere fact that the emperor was at loggerheads with the pope was sufficient to attract crowds of Lutheran soldiers to Frundsberg's flags.

In the soul of the noble Swabian knight Frundsberg, the holy Gospel was firmly established. He entered upon his last campaign with all the German hatred against popery, the foe of the empire. He was heard to say that, when he got to Rome, he would hang the pope. After he had pawned his own property and the jewels of his wife, he was able, in the beginning of November, to muster eleven thousand picked infantry in the valley of the Addige. On rugged

paths they passed over the Alps; the aged leader was carried over the most dangerous places on the long spears of his men. At the end of December he announced his arrival in Piacenza to the Duke of Bourbon in the following words: "Over high mountain and through deep waters, through the midst of the enemy, in hunger and privation and poverty—what shall we do?"

It was a wonderful campaign. While the pope was wavering between negotiations for peace and a war-like policy, a distressing lack of funds made the imperial hosts more unruly. After several breaches of discipline a regular mutiny broke out, first among the Spaniards, and then among the Germans. Bourbon just found time to get out of his quarters, which, after being stormed by the savage Spaniards, were completely pillaged by the Germans. Frundsberg himself stepped into the crowd of mercenaries in order to pacify his unruly children as he had done before. However, he did not succeed. "Money! money!" shouted the mutineers and poised their spears in front of their venerable leader. His strength was unequal to a sight so humiliating. A stroke of apoplexy laid him low and, after lingering disease, he died at home.

But the army rolled forward, dragging along its leaders, in utter disregard of the truce. Through storm and rain, amid rapine and arson, the army marched forward. Cavalry and infantry together numbered twenty thousand men. When they demanded five hundred thousand ducats for facing about, the pope resolved upon energetic resistance, and, for once, the Romans stood by him. They did better than in the previous fall. The pope made a fiery appeal in behalf of the holy war against those Lutherans and renegades. In Rome, however, reigned an uncanny silence. A lunatic gave expression of the popular sentiment by mounting naked the statue of the Apostle Paul and pronouncing a woe upon the pope:

"Sodomite bastard, through your sins Rome will perish; lament your sins and repent!"

The starved imperial army, reinforced by Italian accessions and hungry for booty, left their artillery behind and marched twenty to twenty-four miles a day. At last the prey they had coveted, at the same time an object to them of hate and contempt, lay before them. Hutten, the grim enemy of popery, would have rejoiced, had he lived to see these dreadful March days of the year of 1527. There was scarcely a good German, whether Lutheran or Catholic, who, with Luther, did not consider the Rome of that day the devil's nest. Without any artillery an attack was attempted in the dawn of the sixth of May. For a moment the fire of the defenders threatened to quell the storm, when Bourbon, his foot on the scaling-ladder, received a deadly wound in the act of signalling to his men. But with redoubled fury the mercenaries and the Spaniards continued to fight, and at evening the whole city was in the power of these hordes, with the exception of the Castle of St. Angelo.

For days and weeks, cruelty, avarice, lust, and gluttony held sway within the walls of the unfortunate city. The old opponent of Luther, Cardinal De Vio, called Cajetanus from his city of Gaeta, was dragged by the mercenaries through the streets in a boisterous procession. Another dignitary was threatened with being thrust into an open grave in order to extort from him an immense ransom. On the testimony of Gregorovius, however, it can be ascertained that the invaders have been charged unjusly wih a general destruction of works of art. In this respect they were better than the French, who, one hundred and fifty years later, destroyed the Heidelberg castle and the cathedral of Spires. Be that as it may, most conquered cities suffered a like fate in that age, even if there was not so much ado made about it as about this "Sacco Di Roma."

For one or more months Clement VII. held out

in the Castle of St. Angelo; then he submitted to imprisonment at the hands of the emperor. A leader of the mercenaries, Sebastian Schaertlin, writes: "He was found with twelve cardinals in a narrow hall; there was great lamentation among them; they wept bitterly; we all became rich." The sturdy Schaertlin, one of the better class, all things considered, could not refrain from taking home with him the immense rope with which Judas is said to have hanged himself. Many a common soldier, in the twinkling of an eye, became possessed of twenty, yes, forty thousand, ducats.

That was the "Sacco Di Roma." It was not the Germans alone that saw in it the judgment of God. Dittori the Florentine writes: "Proud, avaricious, hateful, voluptuous, and hypocritical people cannot long maintain themselves." Even the dyed-in-the-wool Catholic Spaniards spoke of it as a judgment of God and the advent of the Reformation. The vices of Rome cried to heaven.

CHAPTER IX.

United and Separated Once More.

HANS and Hinnark were among the mercenaries who, on that memorable day, scaled the walls of Rome. No one was so eager for the conquest of the Eternal City as they, though the booty they had in mind was not money and merchandise, as was the case with the others. A more glorious booty beckoned to them, which made them even more impatient than the others. But it was not their happy expectations alone that stirred their hearts; also heavy care rested upon them. One reason was, that they had heard for a long time nothing of

Younker Kurt and his band. Should the rascal have stayed in Rome and wrought mischief? Even if he had been sent about his business, could he not have come a second time and met with greater success?

Then the ever-increasing degeneration of the army oppressed our friends most heavily. If these riotous bands should be the first to reach the convent which harbored their loved ones, it would be beyond the power of fancy to picture the consequences. Hans had secured from the farmer an accurate description of the location of the convent, and he resolved to storm the wall at the point nearest to it. But would this be possible? Would he succeed in getting there first with his troop? With such grave questions Hans and Hinnark tormented their minds during the storm upon the city. The thought that they themselves might fall did not occur to them.

Their captain promised that he would get as near to the designated place as possible. In this respect success crowned their efforts. Beyond this, of course, the captain could promise nothing; for when his soldiers were once on the other side of the wall, the last trace of authority was gone.

Even most of the officers had left their horses in camp in order to be unimpeded in the assault upon the city. But Hans and Hinnark did not care to separate themselves from their horses. They felt that they might need them for the return march, nor were they at all sure that they would be able to find them in the terrible confusion that was bound to succeed the capture of the city. For this reason Younker Hans directed Hinnark to hold both horses, while he climbed the wall near the gate. Then, the gate having been taken, he helped to open it from within. Both warriors escaped unscathed. Hinnark thanked God for this, while Younker Hans dispensed with thanks altogether. In spite of the rapid progress they made, they were not in the front rank of the invaders. Hundreds raced up the streets as soon as the walls had been scaled, without concerning themselves about the

gate. The frightened inhabitants fled into their homes and barred the doors as best they might. But what was that against the heavy spears and axes with which the savage warriors demolished doors and windows. When Hans and Hinnark approached the place, where, according to their calculation, Mignotti's shop was to be looked for, wails of distress on the part of women and children fell upon their ears. Before a door, which unlike the others, was wide open, stood a cluster of mercenaries. Amid the fierce din of confused voices they brandished their weapons. The strife evidently had some rich booty for its cause. Suddenly the cluster parted, and the blond head of a girl became visible. A snow-white arm tore itself free from the rude fist of a man, leaving nothing but a severed sleeve in its clutch. A large, beautiful girl leaped forth with the cry, repeated once and again:

"Hinnark! Hinnark!"

A double shout of joy greeted hers. Hinnark dashed up amid a shower of sparks. Overwhelmed by his feelings, he raised the girl upon his horse and pressed her to his heart as if he could never give her up.

The younker's question: "Where is your mistress, Dortie?" was the means to restore them to sobriety after the joyful intoxication engendered by their meeting. Suffused with blushes, the girl freed herself from the strong arm of her Hinnark and glided to the earth. Greeting Younker Hans, she exclaimed:

"There, in that convent on the left side of the street, she waits for you. I see that the portal is already broken, but the mother superior has hidden all the younger sisters in a hiding-place in the cellar. I know where it is. Just wait a moment, until I get the palfrey out of the stable; otherwise we might never find him again. Meantime protect me against your comrades!"

In the sure expectation that their liberator would soon come, the two German maidens had passed the winter in tranquillity. The short but bloody battle

which preceded the capture of the city, caused the inhabitants to look for a fearful fate. Valuables were buried, and people barricaded themselves as best they could. Mignotti also wished to do this; Dortie however said: "In two minutes they will burst the light door; better leave everything open. I will stand in the door and in a friendly way invite the German mercenaries to come in for a drink. In this way you will get off more easily." The shrewd Roman understood that. However, casting a lingering look upon the girl, he said:

"But what will become of you? These rough soldiers have a stronger desire for young girls than for money or merchandise."

"I must look out for Younker Hans and my Hinnark," answered the courageous girl. She knew her countrymen, and believed that she could manage them if she spoke German with them. So she remained standing in the open door, riveting her anxious look upon the distant gate. At first she saw only a wild mob rolling down the street, breaking into houses on either side. Presently a few approached her place, looked at her and the open tavern in surprise, and rushed toward her, only to be still further surprised by the words:

"Come in and regale yourselves with a good drink. Do you know Ensign von Hasselbach and his squire Hinnark?"

"We know them well enough," shouted a giant with a fierce-looking beard. "They were with us when we scaled the walls; but if you are waiting for them, you can stand there a long time. They are sure to find other booty. You are the first booty that I spy, and fine booty it is. You belong to me! Whether you are German or Italian, that is all the same today to a starved mercenary."

With this he drew his arm around the girl and attempted to drag her into the house.

Dortie did not quite expect this. She attempted to free herself, but could not escape the grip of the

giant. Then came unexpected help. An ensign seized her other arm and yelled to the gigantic mercenary:

"Hinz, leave her to me! I saw her at the same time you did! If you insist, I will pay down a few guilders for her."

But the giant was by no means willing to yield to his ensign in this respect. Rudely he answered:

"Little younker, get away there or I'll hoist my spear. I lifted it against Frundsberg, and I will not hesitate to lift it against you. Here there are neither servants nor masters, but only free mercenaries."

Angered by such insolent words, the hot-blooded ensign snatched the sword from its sheath, compelling the soldier to lift his spear for his defense against the officer. In doing so, he involuntarily loosened the hold of his left hand upon the girl's arm. That enabled her to tear herself loose, although her sleeve remained in his fist. In the meantime other warriors had come up; but, quick as lightning, she darted through them. At that moment she espied her Hinnark.

In the meantime a violent conflict had broken out before the inn. But since the other soldiers took the part of their comrade, the ensign had to withdraw with a bloody head. Thereupon the others intended to give their attention once more to the escaped girl. But when they saw her coming with the two strong men, a knight and his squire, all of them except Hinz withdrew into the inn. The giant acted as though he would seize Dortie; but a mighty blow from Hinnark sent him reeling backward, and now he, also, had enough of the business. Therefore, Dortie, with the help of Hinnark, could quickly get the palfrey out of the stable. Mounting the animal, she hastened to the convent, whither Younker Hans, in his impatience, had already preceded them.

The abbess employed the same tactics as on the occasion of the previous visitation. She had taken all the younger sisters to the subterranean hiding-

place, while she herself, with some of the older sisters, lay upon their knees in the chapel before the image of the Mother of God when the wild storm burst upon her. This time, however, they were not to get off so easily as in the previous autumn. About fifty warriors had stormed the large convent. Quickly, but unsuccessfully, they had searched every likely space for treasure and young nuns. Presently they were gathering around the poor mother superior and her older sisters. When cuffs and kicks and the most dreadful threats were not able to extort from them their secret, one of the bestial crowd yelled:

"The fire test; that will quickly open their mouths!"

At once a few cut a pew to pieces with their swords. Close to the altar they lit a fire, tore the clothing and shoes from the women, and threw these upon their backs. Then they dragged them so near the fire that the soles of their feet were scorched.

When Dortie and Hinnark approached the portal, the shrieks of the tortured women could be heard.

"Make haste! Make haste!" Younker Hans shouted to them. "The whole of hell is loose within. Hinnark, you hold the horses, while Dortie will show me the way."

Fortunately the whole band of pilferers was at that time assembled in the chapel. In consequence the two rescuers had no trouble in getting quickly through the corridors. At last they found themselves in deepest darkness. She had noted the place carefully, and now she groped her way quickly to the secret door in the wall. Having come to it, she forcibly pressed a certain stone, whereupon a door, covered with thin slabs, yielded to the pressure.

Younker Hans, whose heart was beating as though it would burst, at first saw nothing. He merely heard a low hum, caused by the sudden commotion of the sisters there enclosed. They knew that only an initiated person could open the door; likewise, that the uncouth conquerors whose yells had come down to

them, would not approach quietly in case they had extorted the secret from the older sisters. For this reason they raised no cry of fear.

Miss Elsa lay upon her knees with the sisters. Like the rest, she, too, was praying for deliverance. But her prayer was different from that of the rest in two respects. For one thing, unlike the others, she did not cry to the saints, but to the Savior himself. That a prayer to the saints was idolatry, she did not know yet upon the authority of the Scriptures, which declare: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." But since she recognized in her dear Savior her only comfort in life and death, she prayed only to him, without being aware of an especial Scriptural warrant. Through faith in Him she had found access to the father heart of God, and to this father heart she went straightway in all her needs.

But the contents of her prayer were different, also. All the others prayed only for protection against the soldiers. Miss Elsa prayed for rescue from her convent prison and for reunion with her loved ones. When the thunder of the cannon announced the severe conflict, she felt as if every shot was meant for her Hans. When the battle was presently over, and the hostile crowds were heard in the streets, her hope swelled to confident expectation. Now, when the door was suddenly opened, she leaped to her feet from her kneeling position, pressed both hands on her heart, which was so powerfully agitated that it almost ceased throbbing, and fixed her burning eyes upon the approaching form. By the dim light falling from the little window high up in the wall she recognized Dortie. But her eyes did not rest upon the girl: her gaze swept the darkness of the hall beyond. There she believed she saw the dark outline of a tall form, so well known, but missed, ah! so long. Later she could not tell whether she saw her Hans or just imagined it; but with a shout of joy for which she had gathered force in the bitter sorrow of the past

two years, she sprang forward and lay in the arms of her betrothed.

The scream of the nuns, caused by the appearance of a man, was not heard by the couple. Even a stronger noise, which came from above and increased momentarily in strength, did not disturb the happiness of the occasion. Dortie, however, was much alarmed by the latter. When she saw the two embracing each other in whose reunion, next to God, she had the most prominent part, she stepped out into the hall and wept for joy. But presently she seized the arm of the younker resolutely and said:

"Make haste, sir, the pack are coming this way."

This brought the happy couple back to reality. If this wild pack, which respected neither age nor sex, should espy the beautiful young noblewoman below there, even the sword of Younker Hans might scarcely protect her. Therefore, Hans and Elsa quickly followed Dortie, who led the way. But when they were still a long distance from the exit the din of the intruders and the glare of torches compelled them to hasten into an empty cell. Younker Hans locked the door and observed through the key-hole what occurred outside. Had these been German troops, in spite of all danger, he would have faced them; but they were Spaniards and Frenchmen, with whom his word would have no weight. So he had to submit to the perpetration of the hideous deed about to be enacted. One of the old nuns, no longer able to endure the pains, promised to reveal the hidden treasures. Half naked, she was carried by the light of a torch along the hall, since her scorched feet prevented her from walking. Her shrieks of pain were drowned by the coarse laugh of the mob.

As soon as the pack had stormed past, our friends, full of joy, hastened out of the convent, and joined Hinnark, who had waited for them with great anxiety. He shouted for gladness when he saw his young mistress safe and sound, though somewhat paler than formerly. His shouts were drowned by

the neighing of her palfrey, which recognized its mistress at the first glance. Also the young noblewoman gave vent to her joy when she saw her faithful animal. After shaking hands with Hinnark, she laid her cheek against the head of her horse, whereupon she permitted Hans to lift her into the saddle.

A council as to the next steps to be taken followed. Younker Hans and his betrothed would have preferred to ride out of the gate at once in order to escape the savage doings in the city. Hinnark, likewise, was ready to take Dortie upon his horse. Dortie, however, with a slight touch of that raillery so characteristic of her in calmer days, remarked:

"I was not imprisoned in a convent in the Eternal City like my lady, and, therefore, I have not grown lighter, as she. If Younker Kurt or other robbers should pursue us, your horse would fail under the double burden. I would also like to say goodbye to the Mignotti's; for they took faithful care of me. Probably I shall find my lost sleeve again, too," she added, laughing. "While you procure another horse I will sew it on again and provide some food for the long journey. The starved army has certainly left very little along the way."

Especially the last argument convinced Younker Hans that the sensible girl was right. Therefore he took the risk of staying a while longer in Rome, especially since he and Hinnark were rather exhausted from lack of food.

Also Dortie's unexpressed hope that the two robust warriors might be of service to their Roman friends, was soon fulfilled. The first band, in the meantime, had left the house for the purpose of plundering wherever a mansion might offer booty. The vivacious Mrs. Mignotti embraced Dortie and thanked her again for coming back. The two German cavaliers successfuly prevented all further attempts at pillage that day. For a reasonable sum they secured another horse and, for once, they ate to their satisfaction.

What excitement, yet what blessing, those hours

of reunion contained! Dortie herself served and helped Mrs. Mignotti to fill the saddle-bags. She found her torn sleeve again; then she packed other clothes and linen, and, on the next morning, the little company, with joyful heart, was ready for the homeward trip.

Everywhere marks of pillage were in evidence, although the soldiers were mostly soundly asleep after a night of debauch. Without being halted they passed out of the gate.

"Home! home! to enjoy golden liberty!" exulted Miss Elsa.

"No, into the bonds of matrimony!" jokingly replied Younker Hans.

"They, if any, are of golden substance," rejoined the girl. Without mishap they arrived at Pavia, where Younker Hans and his squire were known, and where they expected to tarry several days. Their young companions were considerably worn out by the sharp ride of several days, even though their overflowing happiness caused them to forget all the vexations of the journey. They put up at a familiar inn, and, for the first time, all found undisturbed sleep. So far Hans and Hinnark had taken turns watching at night, even in the inns of the cities; for all feared an assault by Kurt. After all his other rascalities they considered him capable of this also.

Having arived in Pavia, Miss Elsa said to her betrothed:

"I believe that after realizing the futility of his efforts, he has returned to Germany."

"I rather believe that he has perished in his licentious robber life," answered the knight, who, in his devotion to the young noblewoman, would not credit Kurt with a relinquishment of his purpose.

"What will poor mother say?" said the maiden further, "when I, after escaping from the convent, suddenly come home?"

"She will have to make the best of it; but father will be overcome with joy," answered the knight.

Since his conversation with the confessor, Hinnark had constantly grown happier and cheerier. His trust in the blood and righteousness of Jesus had increased through conversation with Lutheran mercenaries. Having overheard this conversation, and able to impart better solace, he modestly joined the conversation and said:

"The bright light which had arisen in Wittenberg and given light to Younker Ulrich on his last journey, will chase the shadow of the Roman convent system even from the mind of our gracious lady. 'The blood of Jesus Christ, the son, cleanses us from all sin'—this is a word of God that I have learned from a Lutheran comrade."

"What a precious word!" said Miss Elsa, accompanying her words with a timid look at her lover.

Younker Hans understood that look without verbal explanation and looked elsewhere. He knew very well that his unbelief weighed heavily upon the heart of his beloved. Several times on this journey she referred to it tenderly. Since he did not wish to lie to her or to offend her, he always made evasive replies. For a moment he looked down in thought; then he suddenly lifted his head and said joyfully:

"If we get home safely, which I now no longer doubt, I shall be able to believe again that a God directs the affairs of men, and I shall want to make the acquaintance of your Luther. Whoever is able to defy and to overcome the pope and the emperor is certainly a mighty man, and he will be able to overcome my doubts, too."

With a thankful look the girl took the hand of her lover after these words, and the sigh of relief that escaped her told him better than words what a burden he had taken from her heart.

The next morning Younker Hans went into the city to make some purchases for the further journey. To be sure of having taken every precaution, he left Hinnark with the young women at the inn; hoping

to be back shortly. Joyful, he kissed his betrothed farewell and remarked:

"Though it is but for a moment that I take leave, my absence is long enough to warrant this leave-taking."

"I rather see you coming than going, to be sure," answered his betrothed. "Since our final reunion, I dread every separation, however short."

"Does the darkness of the convent still rest upon your soul, sweetheart? Do you not see the bright sun shining? What could happen to me by broad daylight in the well known streets of Pavia?"

"I know that my anxiety is foolish; still it will not leave me. I believe that I shall never be able to breathe freely in Italy. Thank God that we are near our dear German homeland."

A tell-tale tear stole into the eyes of the maid at these words. This gave her lover additional excuse for taking leave, whereupon he hastened away. Outside, he turned around once more; and when he saw his beloved standing at the window with a sad face, he shook his finger at her smilingly, and departed with rapid steps.

When he had vanished, she turned to Dortie. Sobbing, she fell upon her neck and said:

"Whence these dreadful forebodings? I feel that I have seen him for the last time."

"But my dear mistress," Dortie exclaimed with animation, "we certainly are not in the convent in Rome. Hinnark is with us, and a half dozen could not overpower your younker. He is that strong and bold, as Hinnark will have it."

While the young mistress took courage, she could not get rid of her gloomy mood. Younker Hans had not yet gone half an hour when she sat by the window and anxiously looked for him. But when hour after hour passed without the return of Younker Hans, also Hinnark and Dortie became alarmed. They certainly expected their master back by noon: now it was three, and still he was not back. Then Hinnark could

endure the painful suspense of his young mistress no longer. She herself begged him to seek his master, though this was contrary to the instructions of the latter.

"But take care, Hinnark," said Dortie, who feared to see him go; for she also began to have dark forebodings.

"Younker Kurt is back of that," said Hinnark. "I am bound to discover something. At all events, I shall return before nightfall. Do not be alarmed too much, my lady; it is not an easy matter in broad daylight to disappear in this city. I hope that my master will return before me. Do not let anybody persuade you leave this guest-room. Farewell, Dortie; never leave your mistress!"

The latter he said in a low voice, accompanied by a significant look which convinced the girl that even her strong Hinnark was apprehending evil. She wanted to fall upon his neck; for in spite of all her courage, tears came to her eyes. But faithful Hinnark, glancing at his mistress, raised his hand in warning. He did not wish the despairing women to notice his apprehensions. With quick steps he went away at once and did not even look back, although his heart yearned to say farewell. The weeping girls merely saw how, in passing along, he buckled his belt tighter and, with a quick touch, convinced himself that his sword and dagger were still at the right place. He had even taken the spear of his master, something that horsemen are not in the habit of doing when on foot.

Minutes passed like hours for those left behind. Every minute their fear increased till it was almost unbearable. Hinnark did not return, though the sun was about to set.

"O my God and Savior, who didst wondrously deliver me from the walls of the Roman convent, do not permit me to sink into the night of despair!" implored the noble virgin. "My heart fears the worst.

At least let me not remain without some word from him!"

At that moment a young couple, engaged in eager conversation, approached the inn. The woman had a very beautiful form, although it was her dress rather that rendered her conspicuous. Miss Elsa did not notice her at first, and the strange woman did not look at her at all, although, with her young companion, she took a seat quite close to her. But Dortie heard and saw everything that occurred, and at once took offence at the arrogant conduct of those Italians.

"Take care, Signora Bianca," she heard the man say laughingly, "Signor Amalfi is ravingly jealous of the blond German captain. Thus far he did not seem to worry much over you, although you have always preferred the latter. Now we hear that a young German noblewoman has won his heart, but at noon today Amalfi told me that, according to his information, the blond captain stepped into your house this morning. Is that so?"

"Yes," exclaimed the woman in a loud voice and with accents of pride, so that even Miss Elsa was startled and looked at the strangers in astonishment. "The German charm is broken; it hangs upon my neck."

With these words she jerked a little golden locket from her bosom and showed it to her companion.

When Miss Elsa saw the locket, a pain shot through her heart. Did it not look exactly like the ornament which she had given Hans as a keepsake? It certainly was not possible; or should the very worst, which, just then, she had endeavored to avert through prayer, have already come to pass? Pressing both hands violently upon her heart, she awaited further developments.

The companion of the woman leaped to his feet as if impelled by great fear, and said with a pleading voice:

"On your life, conceal that ornament! If Amalfi sees it, he might run his dagger through you as he swore to do with the German."

"I am not his slave," exclaimed the beautiful woman with flashing eyes. But the next moment she grew pale; for a man of savage appearance stormed in. His eyes were blood-shot and bloody stains were on his hand.

Scarcely had he seen the golden ornament in the hand of the woman when, without a word, he made a leap for it, tore it out of her hand, so that the chain around her neck broke and the locket opened. With repusive laughter he shouted:

"She will expect the treacherous rascal just as much in vain as yourself. My stiletto has just pierced his heart."

A shriek, piercing bone and marrow, followed these dreadful words. Miss Elsa, trembling in every member, had arisen. Having seized and examined the locket, she, with a shriek of despair, sank unconscious into Dortie's arms, her hands, with a convulsive grasp, still holding the picture.

"Our job is done," whispered the man who had come in last. Then they all vanished, before the landlord, attracted by the shriek, put in an appearance.

On the next corner they were expected by Younker Kurt.

"Our wages, sir! We have done the job better than we expected. The German young woman lies in the tavern in a swoon, the amulet in her hand."

"Caspar, go and look whether they speak the truth," said the knight. Caspar went and, already at the door, he gave an affirmative sign. With a devilish grin his younker paid the Judas wage. Then he hastened to the tavern, told the landlord that the unconscious woman was his cousin, whom Captain von Hasselbach had kidnapped from a convent, whither he himself now intended to take her back. Also, that the cousin in question had been murdered in a house

of ill fame, and that his squire had been killed there likewise.

As similar things did happen now and then, and the younker was willing to pay the bill for the guests, the landlord raised no objections. But what could the poor girl do? She told the younker to his face:

"If Younker Hans and Hinnark are dead, it is you that has killed them," but the rascal merely laughed derisively, and answered:

"How will you prove it? Did the Italian not acknowledge himself that he murdered Younker Hans from jealousy?"

"You have concocted all this! When the three had frightened my poor young lady to death, they went away together in complete harmony. At least get a physician, or she will die presently in my arms."

Younker Kurt felt the pulse of the unconscious woman and said:

"Let us proceed to the litter. If you want to go along, come! So far as I am concerned, you may stay here."

The girl fought a desperate battle. For one thing, she was not yet convinced that the absent men were really murdered. Her merry disposition could not adjust itself to this dreadful message. Moreover, she simply did not believe that God would permit such a vile act. Also, she had very much reason to fear being alone with these libertines. Finally her love for her mistress prevailed. She could not leave her alone in the hands of these ruffians. She also believed that the swoon would soon pass over; moreover, had not Hinnark said at parting with a serious look:

"Dortie, never leave your mistress?"

Should he have had a foreboding of this dreadful occurence?

After passing her heroic resolution she regained her full energy. A touch convinced her that Hinnark's knife was still in her girdle, so that she was not helpless when the worst should come. Quickly

gathering her few belongings, she whispered to the landlord:

"If our master or his squire return, say to them that Kurt von Uhlenhorst, a cousin of the young lady, dragged us away in a litter borne by mules. He will be grateful to you."

Then she helped to carry the unconscious woman into the litter, sat by her and held her head in her lap. Though the curtains were closely drawn, she could see enough to note the direction. To her surprise they went back over the same street on which they had entered the city from the South. This was altogether incomprehensible to her. But when, at nightfall, the direction was changed and, as was quite clear, a roundabout way was taken to leave Pavia for the South, she uttered her thanks to the heavenly father for the first time that night; for she readily concluded:

"They fear pursuit; therefore the knight and Hinnark are still alive." That thought strengthened her wonderfully.

"If only my lady would finally come to, my good message would soon restore her."

As if her wish were a command, the chair at that moment stopped before the inn where the night was to be spent. Here her mistress finally regained consciousness. But she showed no interest, and was exceedingly weak. Dortie's great discovery made no impression upon her mind. She insisted:

"If my Hans were not dead, the wench would not have had my picture."

"That is all a lie and a deception of this Italian wench," rejoined Dortie.

Suddenly the broken form showed life. Raising herself upon her bed, she said, almost with vehemence:

"Do you think that even a shadow of suspicion against my lover entered my soul? No, he is dead; and I, too, am dead to this world."

With that she collapsed again and fell into a second, sleep-like swoon.

The next morning cousin Kurt came to explain his appearance and his action. He had known about the relation of Younker Hans to the Signora, had also known that Miss Elsa had given her heart to an unworthy person. He did not now wish to obtrude himself again; but he hoped that he would have an opportunity in Pavia to expose the hypocrite. This had come to pass; for, in spite of his sanctimoniousness, Younker Hans had visited his old friend Bianca on the very first morning. He did not suspect that her hot-blooded lover would at once resort to the dagger, which, however, happens in this country rather often. Hinnark, who had gone straightway to Bianca's house, had likewise been killed. He, her cousin, could not permit her to be alone in this strange land. To escape legal embarrassments, he had hastened the departure. He would not torment her with new protestations of love, but would take her home safely. That she would sometime in the future willingly give him her hand, he now scarcely dared to expect.

He played his role well, yet his words did not make the expected impression. He expected complaints and reproaches, which he had hoped to overcome with smooth words, since the maiden now supposed her lover to be murdered. But not a word came from the girl, who was as pale as death. Only her large eyes looked at him so reproachfully that he lowered his own. In this condition matters remained throughout the journey across the Alps. Kurt and Caspar were attention personified; and even Dortie could not complain about obtrusiveness. Elsa lay in the chair as if her mind were wandering, so that the faithful maid was much concerned whether the dreadful blow had not affected her mind.

However, the mind of the young noblewoman had remained clear, and was working diligently behind the closed eyelids. To relieve the dull pain in the heart

her spirit hardly ventured to attempt. But the merciful Savior, to whom she cried day and night, helped to bear her sorrow. Faith in the blood and righteousness of Christ was her greatest comfort in her distress. She longed to be at home with her Lord; she no longer feared death at all; yea, she hoped and believed that the merciful Savior had been gracious to her lover in the hour of death. The desire for her earthly home seemed to vanish with the death of her lover. She rather dreaded to see all the lovely places without him. Her coming would only prepare new torture for her mother, and the service rendered to her father by her return would be very slight, in view of her wasted body, which certainly bade fair to become a prey to the grave. Therefore the resolution matured within her now to do voluntarily what she had refused to do under stress. She was now ready to enter the convent in order to die in peace. She would not take this step to merit heaven for herself. She already knew from her own experience how faulty was the righteousness of the convent: above all, she knew the only Savior and Deliverer. She merely hoped to find peace there, rest,—a place to die.

Knowing well enough that her faithful Dortie would fight against the step hand and foot; she did not tell her a word about it. But when, in the Bavarian Alps, they arrived at the convent whose abbess had made so good an impression upon her on the voyage to Italy, she revealed her intention to the mother superior and was received with joy. Since she had already served a year as a novice in a convent of the same order, there was nothing in the way to hinder her immediate reception. Already the next day her beautiful hair fell, a victim of the shears, amid Dortie's sobs. When Younker Kurt advised to go forward, the janitress sent him about his business with the curt words:

"Miss Elsa has taken the veil; she is a bride of heaven."

This struck him like a bolt of lightning. He did

not doubt it for a moment. The fact agreed altogether with the conduct of the girl on the journey. Striking his head with his fist, he said:

"What donkey I am! With all my cunning I have merely brought about losing her forever. Well, at least Hans did not get her, either."

The young nun had requested only a single concession, namely, to wear her picture, which her lover had so long borne upon his heart, together with a lock of his hair, a request which was readily granted, since it concerned a dead person. Now she really found the rest that she sought; peace, of course, she had gained before she entered the convent, having found its source in the love of God in Jesus Christ through faith. Patiently she took part in all the convent exercises; for she saw nothing sinful in them, though she did not consider them meritorious. The mother superior wrote a long letter to Father Anselm, which the young nun endorsed. The great obstacle to the order putting itself in possession of the girl's rich inheritance had now passed away. An enclosed note read:

"Dortie Peters, the servant of the young noblewoman, firmly believes that Hans von Hasselbach and his squire Hinnark are still living. It might therefore seem advisable to keep the maiden's place of abode a secret. Even though our gracious duke seeks to uproot the Lutheran pest with fire and sword, still, in our restless times, one does not know what such a fierce knight as Hans von Hasselbach might undertake in case he should find out that his beloved is behind convent walls. Nor could I be sure of the young nun, in case she saw her lover alive, whom she now considers dead. As you know, on her journey to Rome she would not think of the convent."

The letter brought great joy to the parsonage of Uhlenhorst. At last the fanatical priest could allay the tortures of conscience which had arisen in the mind of his high-born penitent, who had become very uneasy about the act of violence committed against

her own child. He could now tell her how happy and contented her daughter was in the convent. Then, too, he would rather see the German convent get this rich inheritance than the Italian. That nobody should be acquainted with the deft manipulation for the girl's inheritance, could safely be left to him.

The mother superior in the Bavarian convent saw to it that Dortie could not send any reports home. When the nunnery became too lonesome for the youthful girl, she hired out again to an inn-keeper, by whom, in spite of her North-German dialect, she was made welcome and well treated. However, when she wrote a long letter to Master Smid at Uhlenhorst, upon which she honestly prepaid the high postage, the messenger woman who was to carry it to the next city and to consign it to the Turn and Taxis mail, obedient to instructions, took it to the mother superior. On account of the Lutheran sentiment revealed in this letter a watchful eye was kept upon Dortie, who was wondering why no answer ever came.

Only in one respect the young nun had deceived herself. In spite of her deep sorrow she grew strong in the healthy mountain air, so that her prospects of a long life were of the best.

When Dortie, at one of her frequent visits to the nunnery, expressed her conviction that Hans and Hinnark were still alive, the young nun answered with a sad smile:

"Do not speak of it any more, Dortie. My earthly hopes are buried. If my picture is not proof enough of the death of my lover, do you think that Kurt and Caspar would have permitted their mortal enemy to live, once having him in their power? Concerning Hinnark there is no such proof, — he may still be living. As to my Hans, he is dead."

This conclusion appeared irrefutable, which even Dortie was unable to gainsay. Notwithstanding, she clung stubbornly to her opinion; and, in spite of all evidence to the contrary, she was right.

Soon after Younker Hans had entered Pavia

with his companions, two other horsemen came into the town. This occurred just before the gates were closed. They seemed to be well acquainted; for they rode from one inn to another, peeped through the windows, as if thy wished to convince themselves of the nature of the house, and then hastened on. But when they came before the inn where our friends had put up, the one gave a low whistle and, turning to his companion, he said with derisive laughter:

"The birds are in the nest."

"And tomorrow they shall be caught," rejoined the other.

Then both rode to the nearest tavern.

These men were no others than the licentious Younker Kurt and his Caspar. Jealousy, love of money, revenge—everything had united in the heart of the younker to pursue his rival to death, yea, even beyond it. That he could never win the heart of Miss Elsa so long as she believed her Hans faithful, he knew since he had been in Rome. Therefore his fertile brain hatched out the ruse enacted by Signora Bianca, whose acquaintance he had made upon his former trip. The plan succeeded beyond expectation. A few henchmen of the Signora were hired that same evening. Downright assassination he forebore this time, since such a crime might readily have become dangerous to him in this imperial city, especially in view of the caution and courage of his adversary.

On the next morning, when he saw Younker Hans going out alone, he hastened to the City Hall, where he produced a letter from the imperial ambassador at Rome. It read:

"All officers and friends of his Imperial Majesty are requested to assist the bearer of these lines, the imperial captain Kurt von Uhlenhorst. Assist him by all manner of means to pursue a dangerous French spy, the former imperial ensign Hans von Hasselbach."

The great seal of the imperial legation dispelled the mayor's every doubt. Accompanied by four

bailiffs, Younker Kurt started in pursuit of his enemy, whom Caspar had carefully watched meantime. Younker Hans had stepped into one of the large business places to buy supplies for the journey, when suddenly four bailiffs stepped in and accosted him. Becoming suspicious, he stepped back and put his hand on his sword. Then the leader of the men drew the writing of the mayor out of his pocket which authorized him to take ensign von Hasselbach to the city hall.

Younker Hans read the document and asked:

"What am I to do at the City Hall?"

"You will be told that when you are there. We merely have the duty to take you there, by force if necessary. You had better follow willingly."

The younker reflected. The men really seemed to be bailiffs. Some of them, he thought, he had already seen. Besides, what evil could happen to him in the City Hall? Probably some information was desired about the capture of Rome, which was just beginning to be known. Of course, the matter still appeared suspicious to him; but if he refused to go, he knew he should have a dangerous fight with the heavily armed men. He had already consented to accompany them when he saw his deadly enemy appear in the door. Kurt did not desire his opponent to go along peaceably. Therefore he put in an appearance at that moment.

Hardly had Younker Hans noticed his opponent when he sprang toward him with long leaps, jerking his sword out of its sheath, and struck a mighty blow at his head. The sight of his enemy made all clear to him. He took the servants of the court for disguised assassins, and hoped at least to be able to avenge himself upon the instigator of the foul deed before being killed. But instead of one sword, two gleamed in his face; for Caspar had leaped to the side of his master. Then Younker Hans ran back into the shop, posted himself with his back to the wall, shouted to the proprietor to call the city guard since he had

been pounced upon by assassins, whereupon he began to defend himself to the utmost.

But what could he do alone against six? Bleeding from a dozen wounds, he soon sank to the ground. Younker Kurt wanted to finish him, but the leader of the city guard knocked his sword aside and said:

"We have been sent out to arrest him, not to kill him. Not you but the court will decide as to his life. Take hold, comrades: his life may be of more value to us than his death, if he is really a spy. As yet, I do not believe it; for I formerly knew him as one of the best imperial officers."

When the younker fell, a small golden chain became visible at his neck. With a quick move Younker Kurt seized it and took it, together with the attached locket. When, on opening it, he recognized Elsa's picture, a devilish grin distorted his features, and he hissed between his teeth:

"Now I have her for sure; nothing better could have fallen into my hands."

The guard wanted to raise a protest, but he showed them the picture and said:

"This is a keepsake that the rascal has filched from my cousin. It is not worth a ducat to you; I will give you two for it as a tip for your brave attack."

With this the guard was entirely satisfied.

After they had given first aid to the heavily-wounded man, they carried him to the City Hall on a hastily summoned stretcher.

Younker Kurt gave the name of his inn and said that he wished to be called as soon as the wounded man was ready for a hearing. Then he hastened away, with exultation in his heart. That his clever, devilish plan could ever be wrecked upon the faithfulness of a pure maiden's heart, was a thought that never came into his mind.

When, late in the afternoon, Hinnark was seeking his master, he also fell into the hands of the guard. When they told him that his master had been taken to the City Hall as a traitor, he went of his

own accord to see whether he could not clear up the mistake. To his horror he found his master upon a pallet, wounded unto death. He had not yet regained consciousness, and the brave squire, beside himself with fear, did not know what to do. He soon learned from the guard that Kurt von Uhlenhorst had brought all this to pass. He wanted to hasten back to the inn, to relieve the women of their dreadful fear, to summon them to care for the sick and to protect them from any acts of violence. But despite his earnest pleas the guard would not allow him to go. When, finally, one of them was induced by money and kind words to go to the inn, he soon returned with the information that Miss Elsa had been taken away in an unconscious condition by means of a litter, accompanied by her servant.

Hinnark had to bow to his fate, which he did as a Christian and a man. First of all, he fell upon his knees before his master's couch and prayed for his life. Then he implored God to comfort the abducted women and to preserve them for a joyful reunion. He did not think of himself at all; only of his dear ones he thought, and for them he prayed. The prayer had strengthened him. The surgeon, who had been called at his request, gave little hope for the recovery. But before wound-fever set in, the sick man, to the great joy of his faithful squire, once more opened his eyes. When he saw Hinnark sitting with him, a look of joy spread over his features, followed by unconsciousness once more.

For weeks the faithful servant sat at the bedside of his master and wrestled with God for his life. He also wrestled for his soul and entreated God to protect it against unbelief and despair. His earnest desire for a change of heart on the part of his master was surpassed only by that of Miss Elsa. He was fully convinced that, at the side of a woman of strong faith, even Younker Hans would have to recognize the Lord's mastery, once that he had ceased to despair of the gracious providence of a merciful, almighty

God. The word of a beloved wife, of course, would be sure to exert a much stronger influence than his own; for he was a poor, ignorant squire. Much as, in these days of loneliness and anxiety, he longed for the master's return to consciousness, he, on the other hand, dreaded it. And both his longing and his fears should be realized.

Gradually the wild delirium of fever, in which the patient lay for days after that cowardly attack, passed away. Finally a mild perspiration appeared on the younker's brow, and a calm sleep refreshed his weary limbs. Then his untiring nurse sank from the chair to his knees, folded his hands upon the edge of the bed, laid his heavy head upon it and sent a prayer of thanksgiving aloft to the throne of grace. It was quite short. Once more his broad chest heaved a sigh of relief; then sleep overpowered him. For many days and nights the loyal lad had held it at bay with iron energy in order to come short in nothing as nurse of his master. In his left hand he still held a wet cloth with which he had cooled his hot forehead untiringly. For hours he slept on his knees, his hands folded upon the bed. He was still sleeping when his master at length awakened and regarded him with profound emotion.

Yes, the merciful God, who lets his sun shine upon the evil and on the good, and lets His rain fall upon the just and the unjust, here once more manifested His mercy to a poor human being, who had neither asked Him for His blessing, nor thanked Him after it had been bestowed, nor even recognized it as coming from Him. The first experience of Hans, as he awoke from his swoon, was very agreeable, as is usually the case with convalescents. In addition, he was deeply moved at the sight of his Hinnark. What faithfulness and self-denial were attested by this deep, deathlike sleep, what child-like piety by the kneeling posture! For a long time the younker did not venture to disturb the sleep of his servant. But the agreeable feelings and emotions, when he had awakened to full

consciousness, soon gave way to anguish and despair. How did he happen to get on this sick-bed? Had he not fought with Kurt and his bandits for his dear one? Where was his Elsa? Why was she not at his bedside? With a flash everything became clear to him: he sought to raise himself up in bed; but, with a groan, he sank back upon his pillow, almost relapsing into a swoon.

When he had somewhat recovered, he softly called Hinnark's name. But the sleep of the brave squire was so deep that it took all the strength of his invalid master to awake him. Dismayed by his lack of vigilance, Hinnark finally leaped to his feet.

"Hinnark, where are Miss Elsa and Dortie?" inquired his master, upon whose pale cheeks the flush of the fever, just conquered, began to creep once more.

Now the dreaded moment which Hinnark had expected for a long time had come. What should he say? How could he communicate to his master the terrible message in such a way as to spare him? But before he opened his mouth, his master had read the dreadful message upon the honest features of the squire.

"Did Kurt abduct her? Did his devilish plans succeed?"

Hinnark nodded his head by way of affirmation.

"I had been in the inn the evening it occurred. Immediately after I had gone out to seek you, according to the instructions of my desperate mistress, the rascal came with a litter. He said that we had been killed in a fight. My mistress having fainted, he carried her into the litter by force, although Dortie resisted hand and foot. This the landlord told me. Out of love for her mistress, Dortie also stepped into the litter."

"And with all this you still believe in an almighty God, who permits such heaven-crying dastardliness to come to pass?" his master exclaimed while shrill laughter came from his lips. His mental excitement

was too much for his weak body. He had a relapse, and for weeks he hovered between life and death for a second time.

When he finally recovered, he had only one thought: to ride northward as rapidly as possible and to force from the robber his prey. His assailants failing to appear, he was dismissed from custody.

The city officials excused themselves and made themselves responsible for the payment of his landlord and physician. His grief, however, they had to let him bear alone. True, he did not believe that Elsa would willingly take the rascal, even if she believed her lover dead. But under the influence of her father, who desired heirs for Uhlenhorst, and of the devilish hypocrisy of Kurt, who could say what finally might take place? In no case, however, should his dear one grieve for him a single day longer than necessary! He was yet far from well when he directed Hinnark to saddle the horses.

What prompted him especially to make haste was the discovery he made immediately upon recovering consciousness the second time. To dissipate his sad thoughts he put his hand into his bosom, as he had often done, in order to contemplate the picture of his beloved. Dismayed, he drew his hand back and shouted to Hinnark:

"Where is the ornament? Did the devilish rascal steal that, too?"

Now the question had come which Hinnark dreaded particularly. From the landlord he had learned the facts concerning the locket and Signora Bianca. But he took good care not to tell the sick man everything. He merely confined himself to the statement:

"Miss Elsa, when the ornament was shown, snatched it. Then, with a dreadful scream, she fainted."

For the present, the master, wrought up as he was, did not press for further information. When,

later, he learned the whole proceedings from the innkeeper, he exclaimed in indignation.

"Hinnark, why did you not tell me all this?"

"To spare you in your weakness, master."

"Yes, it is well that I did not see through this dastardliness all at once. It might have been my finish. Now it becomes plain to me how the desperate villain, after his rejection in Rome, could still hope to win my sweetheart. Of course, he will still fool himself. But did the landlord not say that Miss Elsa snatched the ornament from the neck of the wench, and fell into a swoon?"

"No, she snatched the ornament from the hand of the murderer; the announcement of your death broke her heart, for it agreed only too well with our failure to return."

"My poor, poor love!" exclaimed Younker Hans after these words. Exhausted, he sank into a chair, and a tear stole into his eye.

Soon he aroused himself, commanded the landlord to bring the bill, and told Hinnark to saddle the horses.

"Master, tarry yet one week; you cannot possibly stand the long journey now!" Hinnark entreated.

"Here I am consumed by longing. I shall feel better in the saddle. Forward, Hinnark! The iron will of man stands one in better stead than your God."

"Master, do not sin! God might avenge it!" the squire ventured to retort, shocked by the blasphemous utterance of his master.

"He can neither dispense reward nor retribution: of that, Kurt and I are the best proof."

Depressed, Hinnark went into the stable after this remark, in order to saddle the horses. No doubt, to cover his tracks, Kurt had left behind the horses of the girls, which Hinnark now led along by a rope. The journey proceeded slowly. Younker Hans had to learn very soon that even his iron will could not master everything. The difficult ride over the Alps was too much for him. A wound which had barely

cicatrized broke open; in an inn of the mountain country of Bavaria, he had to seek the couch once more. Thoughts of suicide flittered through his clouded soul. Without the self-sacrificing care of his Hinnark, he would have gone to ruin, body and soul. At the same time his beloved was near him, in a nunnery not a day's journey distant. God could easily have led them together; but, as the Scriptures say, His ways are not our ways, and His thoughts are not our thoughts. This proud tree needed to be bent even lower, before it could become a good tree in the garden of the Lord.

CHAPTER X.

On Stray Paths.

"HINNARK, you must travel alone; I may have to lie here many weeks, and winter is at hand," said Younker Hans one morning to his squire. "If you make haste, you can be back before the winter becomes severe. The landlord here is a trustworthy man; our money is gone, except a few guilders, and those you will need for your journey. But we have the two horses, for which we have no use at present. I will send them to him, and for the money they bring he will be willing to nurse me. The mere announcement that I am still living will work wonders in Uhlenhorst, provided they have not already driven my poor sweetheart into marrying the rascal. I sometimes fear that the trick with the Italian wench may have made an impression upon her heart all the same."

"Sir, it is only your desperate mood that suggests such dark thoughts to you," his squire answered in a tone bordering on anger. "I would almost wager my head that not a shadow of distrust has entered

the heart of our dear lady. Oh, if you could only trust our dear Lord as I do:—such cares would never steal into your heart."

"Yes, Hinnark, my unbelief does not make me happy; in fact, it makes me unjust even toward her who is dearest on earth to me. After calm consideration I know that my anxiety is despicable, that my dear one would trust me unto death. But desperation, I admit, gnaws at my heart, and in that condition, one doubts everything. Return soon, Hinnark, at least before Christmas, or you might not find me alive any more. My soul is sicker than my body."

"Master, I will start this very hour; and if robbers do not slay me or some other accident happens, I shall soon be back, to bring good news if it pleases God. My dear master, promise me that, during my absence, you will do yourself no harm; otherwise I shall not have an hour's rest."

With this he looked at his master so pleadingly that the latter was profoundly moved. Holding out his hand to him, he said: "Yes, I still have one thing in the world—a faithful servant, who deserves a much richer and happier master. I do not want you to worry about me, too, on your difficult and dangerous journey. I will give you my word of honor that I will await your return, even if I have to wait till spring. I know that I do not need to admonish you to make haste for this reason."

Hinnark went as far as the door; then, as if in doubt, he turned around once more and, clearing his throat several times, he, at length, said:

"Pardon me, master! I have another request."

"Out with it, Hinnark; I have very little left to give away, but what I have is granted in advance."

"Then all is well; it is not for myself, but for yourself that I plead. In case I shall not return, such being the Lord's will, go to Dr. Luther. If anybody can do it, this man of God can certainly lead you back to faith; for it is to him that myself and thousands of others are indebted for a living faith."

The countenance of the younker grew dark; he thought of the day when his bride had made the same request. At that time, in the joy of his heart, he gladly consented; for he really thought that he had really recovered faith in God. But had not his weak faith been destroyed by the dreadful experiences which he had had since,—experiences that, according to his view, could originate only in a blind fate and not in the providence of an all-wise God? Finally, in order not to offend his faithful Hinnark, he said: "Can your Dr. Luther reverse the past? But, to satisfy you, I will grant your request."

Relieved of his great burden, Hinnark now hastened to the stable to saddle his horse. An old soldier, he himself needed little preparation. His saddle-bags were soon packed; after bidding his sick master a hearty farewell, he rode northward.

In the region of Luneburg the Reformation had so far made but little progress. In 1524, Archbishop Christopher still obligated the clergy of his diocese to an attitude hostile to the Lutheran doctrine. Count Ernest forbade the Barefooted Monks in Zelle, who sowed dissensions among the people, to leave the monastery. This was in 1527. Also, he had met Luther at Torgau. But his cautious disposition induced him to dread insurrection. He still remembered the Peasant War; and from anything like that he wished to protect his realm. The knighthood of his realm, led by the abbot of the rich Benedictine monastery in Luneberg, refused to yield to his financial demands; the council of this city, the only one in his dominions of any size, was nearly constantly at loggerheads with him. Unfortunately, this very year his father Henry, who had almost bankrupted the country, in spite of his promises to the contrary, returned from France with new demands. For this reason the duke had to be very cautious in introducing church innovations, although he himself leaned decidedly toward the Gospel. Where the clergy were of the Roman persuasion, the

congregations, for the most part, followed their leaders.

The latter was the case in Uhlenhorst, where the fanatical priest Anselm permitted no Sunday to pass on which he did not thunder against the heretics. The patron of the church sat hunched up in his pew, scarcely hearing him. His joy in life had vanished with his children, and he seemed to have aged many years. His wife was altogether different. Since her return from the pilgrimage to Rome, there was not a more zealous Papist in all the land. While formerly her whole mind was given to finery, show, and pleasure, she now could scarcely do enough for the old faith. Before all her acquaintances of the nobility she prided herself upon having given her only child to the convent, and compliments upon her sacrifice gave her exceedingly great pleasure. Among her servants and in the congregation she worked against every trace of Lutheranism. Every week she went to confession, although the motive prompting her was largely the desire to hear the priest assuring and reassuring her that, by the offering of her daughter, she had rendered satisfaction for all her sins, and had received plenary indulgence.

Among the servants, and also in the village, it had been rumored that Younker Ulrich had died happy, trusting in the blood and wounds of Christ. Miss Elsa, also, had testified to those about her of her simple faith in the Savior of sinners. In consequence there were many in Uhlenhorst who quietly accepted the new faith, which, after all, was merely the old Bible doctrine. Their knowledge was indeed very limited: Lutheran writings had not yet strayed into the quiet village upon the heath, and the superstition and idolatry of the Roman church was not yet recognized. People went to church and to confession, went through the exercises prescribed under the name of penance, and guarded the light which has entered from Wittenberg as a hidden treasure—hidden

especially from the eyes of the priest and Madame von Uhlenhorst.

There was one person, however, whom she could subject to the ebullitions of her new zeal, namely, the old honorable master Smid. Father Smid, it is admitted, had not yet penetrated to the true peace of the children of God. The activity of Father Anselm has made an impression upon him. His austere life, his zeal, his thorough devotion to the doctrines of the old church, gave effect to the wily words with which he deceived his confessant. Without betraying his mother, Master Smid had gone to the priest to confess that he had heard about "trusting alone in the wounds and the blood of Christ," but that he had not dared to believe the implied doctrine.

"Blessed be Mary, the mother of God, who has preserved you from this Lutheran pest, which is everywhere creeping in the dark!" the priest answered in his zeal. "Such a doctrine may appear pleasant to a perjured monk like Luther, who, in his unbridled carnal lust, has gone so far as to lead a bride of heaven out of the nunnery and to make her his paramour. To have just a little faith and then all sins are forgiven, all penalties of purgatory, yes, of hell, are atoned for! But an earnest Christian is horrified at such a doctrine, which takes away every incentive to an earnest Christian life. Such teachings being abroad, shameful atrocities like those of the Peasant War will appear. Why, State and Church would perish through such a heinous doctrine as that taught by Luther. I fear that the Anti-Christ will be born from the concubinage between the Wittenberg monk and the renegade nun. The Bible has prophesied his coming in the last evil time."

Poor Master Smid could not answer this blind leader of the blind that Luther had put off marriage a long, long time—full eight years after abandoning monastic life, and that it seemed odd that a marriage unthought of until years afterwards should have been his motive in renouncing his monastic vows. Nor

could he have answered, as we should answer today, that the warmth of affection and the purity of Luther's home life were such that they serve as an example for us of today, so that it would have been a positive loss to the world had Luther never become a husband and a father. Nor could he answer him in the words of Christ, that only a good tree, that is, only a person regenerated by faith in the grace of Jesus Christ, could perform works acceptable to God. But the master's thoughts dwelt upon his godly mother, who had been happy and blessed in the very faith which the priest was damning so dreadfully. With bowed head he went away from the confessional and sighed:

"Oh, if only my Hinnark would return and bring me light!"

Madame von Uhlenhorst, by persistent investigation, had found out that Smid the tailor had been first to tell her daughter about salvation alone by grace through faith in Christ. She also knew that her son had died in this faith. She was still having mass read for her son to liberate him from purgatory; but she poured the vials of her wrath upon the poor tailor at his next appearance. With coarse abuse she drove him from the castle and forbade him her house for all time to come. The work at the castle was given to the tailor from the nearest village. Fortunately she could not rescind the donation of the five acres, so that, in spite of the loss of his best customer, the tailor and his family could still make a living. When she told the priest about her heroic act, he was careful not to censure her. On the contrary, he praised her zeal for the saving faith, though he knew that injustice had been done to the sturdy tailor. He could not afford to alienate his most devout parishioner: that would jeopardize the whole, fine inheritance, which had so easily fallen into his lap.

The Master of Uhlenhorst did not concern himself about such matters: in fact, he scarcely heard of them. In gloomy brooding he passed his days, finally to find solace in the cup. Seldom that he was not

intoxicated. His wife let him do as he pleased, for in this way she could manage to suit herself.

It was on a raw fall evening in the year 1527, when tailor Smid sat dejected in his room, staring at the large, peat-heated oven. The children had been sent to bed, his wife was darning stockings by the light of an oil lamp, while the old mother was nodding back of the stove. A deep sigh from his wife causing him to look up, he noticed a tear in the eye of his companion. Softly he arose, stroked the hair and cheeks of the weeping woman and said:

"Mother, why do you weep?"

The woman dropped her work and laid her head on the breast of her husband. Bursting at length into tears, she spoke, interrupted by frequent sobs:

"Father, you know why; I fear that our Hinnark will never return."

The master could not give an answer; for he had the same fear, even though he had never expressed it.

From the corner at the stove, however, came the soft words:

"Children, God still lives!"

"Yes, grandmother, but our Hinnark is dead," sighed the daughter-in-law.

"God alone knows that; I still believe that he will return."

"But it will soon be three years since he rode away, and not even one letter has arrived for a year. In the dreadful sack of Rome, which travelers report, he no doubt perished, or he would at least have written."

"In times of war letters can easily be lost. I believe that my old eyes shall see him again; and I shall hear from him what Dr. Luther really teaches, what I really believe."

"God grant it!" said the master with a sigh; but, in his downcast condition, he was not able to rise to the joyful hope of his mother.

After a while the wife of the master said:

"Also of Dortie Peters we have not heard or

seen anything since the two men came home without the young mistress. I fear that that noble girl has paid for her faithfulness with her life."

"At least with her freedom. If they could hold a young noblewoman against her will, as I suspect, they surely can have put the poor girl behind bars, too," said the master.

"Of one thing I am sure; namely, that neither our noble young lady nor our godchild has willingly entered the nunnery. Here already our young lady comforted herself with the dear Savior and opposed the convent hand and foot," said the grandmother.

"If the old gentleman were not so completely under the influence of his wife he would still have many doubts, in spite of the letter that the daughter is said to have written. But Dortie is such a strong, courageous girl that she will not be put behind bars for good. If she is not dead she will again find her way home. She also sent a letter to Hinnark through Peter Lange. But if the younker and Hinnark have discovered where the girls are, they have also tried to set them free."

"Yes, mother; and, in doing this, they, very probably have perished," sighed the wife, once more reaching for the corner of her apron.

The subsequent silence was suddenly interrupted by the trampling of a horse, sounding with increasing distinctness into the room from without. The master and his wife thought that it was some horseman bound for the tavern, and paid no further attention. But Grandmother Smid, who, in spite of her age, could still hear rather well, arose expectantly; with trembling heart she listened to the trampling, coming closer and closer. The old watch-dog began to bark savagely; but suddenly his bark became a yelp of joy such as only a dog can emit when he is in highest glee. Even this the tailor and his wife scarcely noticed. They thought the late comer to be a friend of the family, a frequent visitor of their home. But the grandmother, overcome by her emotions, sank back

into her arm-chair, raised her trembling hands to heaven, and said:

"My God and Savior, hast Thou so soon heard my prayer and sent our Hinnark home?"

A feeble cry from the master's wife, accompanied by a movement of the hand to the heart, answered her.

The presentiment of the grandmother had been sent by God to prepare the feeble mother-heart for the joy which, otherwise, she might not have been able to bear. Now the master and his wife arose at the same time and hastened to the door. Should grandmother have been right? Should what had appeared to be impossible be possible after all?

When the horseman suddenly stopped before the door, vaulted from the saddle and hurried to the door, the father shouted:

"That is Hinnark's step!" Jerking the door open, he lay in the arms of his son, whom he had believed dead.

But only for a moment. The eyes of the son passed by the father and rested upon a deathly-pale woman, who had stood still in the middle of the room because her heart had suspended its work. With a long leap Hinnark was at the side of her who had given him life. The strong arms of the son protected her from the heavy fall; on his bosom she soon regained consciousness.

After he had led her to her stool, he was able to greet grandmother. She had remained in the chair, her trembling knees preventing her from arising. Hinnark knelt down before the little form, who laid her hands in blessing upon his head. The grandmother, calmer than the others, was first to speak an intelligible word after all the sobbing and weeping of the company.

"Where is Dortie?" she asked.

At that question Hinnark leaped to his feet in great excitement and exclaimed:

"Did she not come home with the young mistress? At the command of my young master, I rode

almost through the whole of Germany to see whether the young noblewoman had married Younker Kurt."

"Neither Younker Kurt nor Miss Elsa have returned," said the father, "but was the young lady not in a Roman nunnery?"

"Through Dortie's letter we got on their track, and in the spring, at the sack of Rome, we rescued both. Safely we had already gotten as far as Pavia, when Kurt von Uhlenhorst, the rascal, fell upon us and abducted the mistress. Dortie did not abandon her lady. My master, mortally wounded, was down for a long time with illness. In his impatience he started too soon, and has now broken down again. In Bavaria he anxiously awaits my return. But where might Dortie and her mistress be? That the young lady would not marry the Uhlenhorst man I am certain, even if she considered her master dead."

Deep silence reigned; finally the mother said:

"Does the young lady consider her lover dead?"

"Very likely; for the assassin took a little picture of his sweetheart from the breast of my younker, and, by a trick, got it into the hands of the young woman."

"Then she evidently has gone voluntarily into a nunnery, in order to avoid marriage with the rascal, and to find peace to die."

Maternal intuition guessed the truth, and the others accepted her interpretation as probably correct.

"But where does Dortie stay; why does she not come home?"

"For a girl it is very hard to travel alone," answered the father.

"Then she certainly could have been expected to write."

"Letters can easily be lost and, more easily still, intercepted."

"Do they know nothing of the lost ones in the castle?"

"Hardly. Madame von Uhlenhorst still brags about the great sacrifice she has made for the church, and opposes the new doctrine. If the young lady

has really entered the nunnery, at least Father Anselm knows about it. Dortie told me that in Germany already he had tried his best to coax the poor, young lady into the convent of his order. In view of the large inheritance, there is no doubt that he would be informed of such a step should the young lady really have taken it."

"You might make an attempt tomorrow at finding out," the father suggested, "but take care of your words!"

"Why do you say that?"

"The lady ordered me out of the house, merely because she learned that I had said something to her daughter about grandmother's faith in the Lord Jesus as the only Savior of sinners. But I scarcely dare to comfort myself with it."

Now another subject came up.

"Grandmother is right!" cried Hinnark with a loud voice. "An Italian priest, who administered extreme unction to me, said the same. That is the doctrine of the Gospel, as it is also preached by Dr. Luther. I have read some of his writings, which comrades loaned me."

"Did you hear him, or bring any of his writings along?" anxiously asked the father.

"Alas, no! I would gladly have gone over Wittenberg, but love for my sick master caused me to hasten on. Also, my last penny has long since been spent; without sympathizing people, I and my horse should have starved. But I have experienced the power and the comfort of the Gospel!"

"O you poor boy!" the mother then exclaimed, "I did not even once think of offering you anything."

Then she hastened to the cupboard, and soon there stood before the half-starved boy sausage and ham from a recently slaughtered hog. But before he sat down, he said:

"Father and mother, before I sit down to your table to eat, I must again ask your pardon, as I have already done in my letter."

The mother again raised her apron to her eyes; the father, however, said:

"God has, no doubt, forgiven you as I have long since. Thank God that you have returned well and sound."

Hinnark enjoyed the supper as only a man could who has returned from war and is sitting at his mother's table. But the urging of his mother continued even longer than his appetite. Finally he got back again to his story; and it was past midnight when, at last, the family thought of going to sleep. Early the next morning Hinnark went over to the priest. As a brave warrior he intended to storm the strongest fort first. Naturally he feared that he should get little information from this astute priest, and his fear proved well founded. If Hinnark was to attain his purpose, he had to take the priest by surprise. Therefore, after several words of greeting, he asked with utmost frankness:

"You surely are aware, Reverend Sir, into which convent Miss von Uhlenhorst fled from her cousin Kurt?"

The priest, in spite of himself, changed color. He knew the whole course of events from the letter of the Bavarian mother superior. From his maid he had learned that Hinnark had arrived; in consequence many things had to be taken into consideration. He would have preferred with some thunderlike word to strike to the earth the brave squire, whom he suspected of being infected with the Lutheran heresy, particularly in view of his share in the abduction. But he preferred cautiously to sound the squire as to what he really knew. If his master were still alive and should discover where his dear one was, the desperate fellow might rescue her for the second time, if he had not done it already. The question of Hinnark's caused him to fear the worst, which, in spite of his careful planning, was the cause of his change of color. Hinnark did not fail to observe this. But,

quickly collecting his thoughts, the priest, with well feigned surprise in word and manner, answered:

"Was that unknown to you and your master? Were you not also at the horrible sack of Rome? Where does your master tarry now?"

He heaped question after question upon Hinnark to confuse him, but Hinnark, on his part, was watchful and answered guardedly:

"I know very well that Miss Elsa was in the nunnery in Rome. But she was abducted by her cousin."

The priest was just about to say:

"You lie, fellow! You yourself and your master abducted her," but he restrained himself, inasmuch as what Hinnark has said was true, too. Therefore the priest once more simulated surprise, even indignation, and yelled:

"To rob the Lord of a bride of heaven! The wicked example of the Wittenberg archheretic is eating like a cancer. But since you know this, where were you and your master at the sack of Rome, this everlasting disgrace to the Christian name?"

Hinnark was now convinced that the priest knew the woman's place of abode, but that he could get nothing out of this monk in any event. Therefore, without answering the question of the priest he suddenly arose and said:

"Pardon me, I must hasten."

"But you have not yet answered my question. Is that the way for a confessant to treat the father confessor?"

"You are not my confessor; neither have you answered my question."

With these brief words Hinnark went out of the door.

"Insolent heretic brood!" he heard the priest remark after he had turned his back; but the words evoked no other response than a grim smile. With long steps he made for the castle. When he was halfway there, he happened to turn around, and, to his

chagrin, he noticed that the priest was following in the greatest haste.

"Ah," he thought, "now the shepherd wishes to protect his lambs against the Lutheran wolf. I must hurry or I shall not get to see the old gentleman at all."

With that he ran rather than walked to the castle, so that he arrived there five minutes in advance of the priest.

"God in heaven! There comes Hinnark, and he is running as if the village were on fire," cried old Peter Lange when he saw him.

"Man, where did you come from? Do you bring news of our poor young lady?"

"Yes, Peter; do you not know anything of her here?"

"We have not heard a syllable of her or Dortie since we left Rome."

"I believe that the priest knows more, but he says nothing. Take me to your master at once! There the priest comes running to bar my way."

"Then come, comrade!" resolutely said the old squire. "True, my mistress forbade me strictly to take any person to the old gentleman without first having announced it to her. But when our dear young lady is involved, I will risk anything."

In passing along, Hinnark, with hasty words, told his old friend what had happened, and then added:

"In case the mistress orders me away, you make your way to us this evening. I must ride away again tomorrow; for my master is being consumed with impatience. The mere information that Younker Kurt did not carry the young lady away, but that, most likely, she is in a convent will somewhat cheer him."

With that they arrived at the door of the hall, in which the old master of Uhlenhorst sat behind his morning cup. Hinnark was dismayed at his appearance. His frame was aged and bowed; his eyes, formerly so merry, now were bleared. The old gentle-

man did not even recognize Hinnark. Not until Peter Lange called his name and said that he brought news from Miss Elsa, did his tired eyes flash and new life come into his whole frame. Arising from his chair, he cried with a loud voice:

"From the joy of my heart, the poor nun in distant Rome, you bring me news?"

"She never was a nun in Rome; with trickery and force the priest forced her into the convent; but Dortie Peters gave us information, and at the sack of Rome my master rescued her."

With both hands the old master seized Hinnark and fairly yelled:

"My Elsa is not a nun, but has been rescued by Hans? Where are they? Are you the messenger who announces their arrival?"

"At that moment the mistress, aroused by the loud talking of her husband, swept into the hall Recognizing Hinnark at once, she scented mischief. But at first her anger was vented upon the old servant who had dared to disobey her.

"Who gives you the right, contrary to my will, to admit anyone to the sick master? You will pay for that."

"He will?" her spouse now exclaimed with energy surprising her by its very existence. "Am I no longer master at Uhlenhorst, that I can not receive whom I please? Hinnark brought me the sweetest message that can be brought on earth. Peter Lange spoke the truth when he told me what Dortie Peters had confided in him. My Elsa was held by Roman priests through trickery and force, but Hans has rescued her and is bringing her home."

As if smitten with apoplexy, the wife sank into a chair; her heart fairly stood still from fright. But at the same moment the priest appeared in the door; at sight of him, she rapidly recovered herself. But Hinnark, who had not at once noticed the priest, said to Herr von Uhlenhorst:

"Sir, I wish that everything were just as you

conceive it; but in Pavia Kurt von Uhlenhorst waylaid my master and myself and then abducted your daughter together with Dortie Peters. Since they never arrived here, it seems to me that Miss Elsa considered her lover dead, and has hidden herself in some nunnery from the assassin. I believe that father Anselm knows the abode of your daughter, but he will not tell it."

"Audacious rascal! How dare you presume upon a priest of God?" suddenly the priest interposed with a voice of thunder, so that everybody was startled and looked around.

The cautious Peter Lange noiselessly slipped out of the door. He had been so intimidated by his severe mistress that he seldom expressed an opinion of his own.

But defiance arose in Hinnark, especially since he fought for the happiness of his beloved master. Therefore he answered in an excited voice:

"When you grew pale a moment ago I knew that you knew more than your admitted. Miss Elsa has been held in the convent at Rome through shameful treachery and force; she never wrote that letter in which it is alleged that she voluntarily entered the cloister. She rejoiced when my master finally freed her from captivity. Now she may have entered the convent in despair; but her betrothed lives, and he will rescue her if he keeps his life."

Madame von Uhlenhorst really believed that her Elsa had written that letter in Rome, because she wanted to believe it. Her happiness, as she thought, depended on it. Having, meantime, rallied from her deadly fright, she, like fury, rushed at Hinnark and yelled:

"Get out of the house, or I will have the dogs set on you, as I threatened to do to your fine master."

Hinnark, however, paying no attention to her raving and yelling, firmly looked the old gentleman in the eye and said:

"Are you willing to let your daughter languish

in grief and sorrow, or will you make an effort to discover her abode and bring her home?"

Pushing Hinnark aside, the priest cried:

"Herr von Uhlenhorst, do you rather believe a vagabond mercenary, who evidently is merely concerned about a tip for his lying message, than your father confessor and the wife who has plighted her troth to you and whose motherly heart is concerned about the welfare of her child?"

The courage of the old gentleman, which had flamed up for a moment, already began to weaken before the woman and the priest, who, for a long time, had exercised control over the weak old man. He sank back into his chair, and the blear, weary expression came back into his eyes. For a long time he permitted his heavy head to rest upon his hand. His heart and reason told him that the warrior was saying the truth; but what could he do, an old man afflicted with gout? Once more, however, he aroused himself. Fixing his dull eyes, from which the anguish of a tormented father heart shone forth, upon the priest, he said, lifting his hand as if about to swear:

"Swear to me that my child herself wrote that letter of farewell, and that you know nothing of her flight from the convent."

Hinnark's sharp eyes noticed that the priest was startled and that he colored at this unexpected turn. Already he was jubilant; for he believed that the old gentleman had found the right way to discover the truth. But the next moment the godly soldier lad stepped back with blanched face; for he saw the hypocritical priest slowly raising his hand for an oath and he heard the words:

"I swear."

Loud, almost screaming, the man uttered the words as if to conceal his inner excitement. Manifestly, to perjure oneself was a hard matter, even for this fanatic, who, in the service of the church, had perpetrated many a rascality before. But here there was too much at stake. He could not; rather, he

would not, retrace his steps; therefore he had to go on with fear, like many a one who has put his feet on the downward path of sin. In this the mediaeval casuistry of his church, later developed by the order of the Jesuits, came to the assistance of his conscience. The so-called mental reservation fitted in grandly; therefore he added in a whisper to the words spoken audibly, "I swear," these others:

"That I have done all to the best of our holy church." Therewith he believed to have fulfilled all righteousness.

In spite of this he noticed that the sweat of anguish was pouring out of his body, and he was glad that Hinnark stepped back at that moment, so that, without being observed, he could wipe the sweat caused by his perjury from his forehead.

Hinnark felt dread of that priest. Even if he did not know the abode of the young woman, he was quite sure that Miss Elsa herself had not written the letter. Without a doubt he had written it himself; for he well knew the handwriting of the girl.

The old gentleman had not failed to observe the embarrassment and pallor of the priest; neither could he, with his straightforward, honorable heart, think of perjury: he was dumbfounded. With a sigh he fell back into his chair, his head sank down upon his breast. He had nothing to say.

Madame von Uhlenhorst, who had worried not a little over the tidings brought home some time ago by Peter Lange, was now full of joy over her speedy and complete escape from the much greater danger. The oath of the priest could not but set at rest the last doubt of her husband. Therefore, with an ironical look, she turned to Hinnark and said:

"Will you still persist in palming off your tale upon us for the purpose of getting a tip by fraud? Away with you or the dogs will bring you the tip!"

Hinnark cast one last lingering look upon the forlorn frame of the old gentleman; then, with a heavy step and heart, he took his leave.

Arriving at home, he merely said:

"Everything is in vain; for nobody believes me. I must go at once to Hasselbach, and get a little money from my master's estate. Tomorrow, before daybreak, I will again ride southward."

"Why, child, you have just come home; you are still weak and miserable from the long journey, and already you want to ride away?" lamented the mother.

"Mother, how gladly I would now stay with you. My foolish desire to see the wide world has long since vanished. Duty to my sick master and love for him call me back. But do not worry! As soon as I can, I will return home. I am convinced that Dortie also will be heard from soon. She may come herself even. Also, I shall write once in a while, so that you may know how I am getting along."

The father agreed with the son, and the mother submitted with a sigh. To spare his horse, Hinnark had to make the journey to Hasselbach afoot. He still was not certain whether he should tell his parents about the perjury of the priest. Would he not unnecessarily distress them? He finally decided to say nothing about it, but to make clear to his parents as much as possible the Lutheran faith in the blood and wounds of Christ. If Dortie should come home or even write home, the truth would come out anyway. What he regretted most was his inability to give his parents any definite address to which they might forward a possible message from Dortie.

The income from the little estate was certainly very small, and Hinnark went home full of care. It would scarcely last till his master was restored. As he sat with his parents late that night, the dogs barked and Peter Lange stepped in. Hinnark believed that his old companion in war had come merely to say farewell; but how astonished he was when he drew a heavy purse out of his pocket and handed it to him with the words:

"This is everything that my master had in the

house. You are to greet your master and say that he is not to cease seeking the lost ones and then to bring them home. He himself will wait for them till his last gasp."

"Well! Does your master not accept the oath of the priest?" asked Hinnark in joyful excitement.

"He said nothing about that. When the priest was finally gone and I had taken my master to bed, he whispered into my ear: 'Take the key out of my garment and open the secret drawer. There must be about a hundred dollars in it yet. The most of my money now goes to the priest for reading mass. Take this money secretly to Hinnark; but be sure that my wife does not find it out.' My master, after the excitement of the morning, had a severe attack of gout. I am afraid he will not last much longer."

"Then your master believes an ordinary squire more than he does the priest and his own wife," replied Hinnark. "Deliver to him my heartiest thanks and greetings, and tell him that we shall not rest until we have found the lost one. If she once knows that her lover is still alive, she will return with him, even though she really has become a nun. Dr. Luther has set more than one nun free; many nunneries in the country are empty. But take good care of the old gentleman, Peter, so that our young lady may find her father alive on her return. Who knows what trouble the deluded mother and the fanatical priest may make on account of the inheritance. Tell the old master very frequently that he must take care of himself for the sake of his child; that will give him new courage."

"What is that about the oath of the priest?" now asked the father.

Embarrassed, Hinnark answered:

"I had made up my mind not to bother you with that, but now it has popped out. I told Herr von Uhlenhorst that his daughter never wrote that farewell letter after she is said to have gone voluntarily into the Roman nunnery, and that the priest very

likely knows where she is staying. His evident confusion this morning has convinced me of that. The priest, who had overheard my words to the old gentleman, spoke to me in tones of thunder, and the lady wanted to drive me from the place with hounds. The old gentleman, who at first showed much interest, seemed crushed. However, he made the priest swear that Miss Elsa herself had written the letter, and that he knew nothing of her abode. Surely, the man took a false oath."

"O God!" exclaimed the father. "I can no longer go to confession to him. How will this end? How can the servants of the holy church, who are to guide us to heaven, act thus?"

"At many places the Reformation has already begun," said Hinnark. "It will come here also. Hope on patiently; the truth shall be victorious."

That was another evening of excitement in the tailor shop. When Hinnark finally retired, the parents were still sitting up. The father sewed all night for his son, and the mother assisted him after they had filled his saddle-bag to the top with the very best that the house afforded. When day dawned, she tiptoed into his room to awaken him and yet not to rob him of one moment of sweet sleep. There he lay, her first-born, hearty and handsome, as she could observe after opening the shutter. He slept so soundly that he was not aware of her coming. She sank upon her knees before his bed, prayed and wept for a long time. At length she laid her hand upon the head of the son.

"Mother's hand," he whispered smilingly and slept on, unaware how much good the two words did the mother heart.

At last she arose and awakened him by printing kiss after kiss upon his lips.

When he saw his little mother before him, he took her in his arms, kissed her and sought to comfort her with words of love. With the first ray of the morning sun he vaulted into the saddle and trotted southward.

At the same time a messenger went from the priest's house to Luneburg, carrying a letter from the priest to his cloister at that place. In it the doings of Hinnark were related and the local authorities consulted whether, through a special letter or messenger, the sister convent in Bavaria should be notified. On account of the importance of the matter they really sent a brother southward with the message. Little did the young nun suspect a few weeks later what excited conversations were taking place in the convent about her and Dortie. What she did observe was that her father confessor became more and more persistent in his efforts to induce her to reveal her whole heart. In a short time he had learned by such methods about her Evangelical faith. As a wise man he was of course careful not to declaim against it, lest he should frighten her or even drive her to flight. On the other hand, he tried his utmost to praise the life of a nun as the surest way to heaven, and to destroy the good seed of the pure gospel.

Also Dortie was watched more sharply. Seldom she was allowed to visit her mistress, and never in the absence of the mother superior. It was soon learned that Dortie had not at all approved the step of her mistress. Also a second letter, which she wrote after waiting several months for an answer to the first, got into the hands of the mother superior. When the messenger from Uhlenhorst arrived and reported that the betrothed of the young nun was still living and looking for her, they were doubly careful.

From her mistress and also from her earnest Hinnark, Dortie had accepted the Evangelical faith in the blood of Jesus Christ as the sufficient atonement for her sins. But when she observed what rabid Papists the people in that section were, she cautiously concealed her religious views, which, in any event, lacked clearness. She went to church and confession, and attended to her duties. To what extent she was under surveillance she did not realize.

The snow was already deep in the mountains

when Hinnark, after a tiresome journey, reached his master safe and sound. In these long weeks the latter had made but little progress toward recovery. The appalling depression of his mind retarded his convalescence. Hinnark considered a long time how he could best announce his message, so that it would be a healing medicine for the wounded soul of his master. With a cheerful face he stepped into his room, so that his master, joyfully looking up, addressed him with the words:

"Your countenance brings me good tidings, which, all those sad weeks since your departure, I had scarcely hoped to receive. My Elsa, though she evidently considered me dead, did not marry the scoundrel?"

"No, for they did not arrive at home at all."

"What, they did not get home?" asked Younker Hans in astonishment. "Could she have died of a broken heart?"

"In that case Dortie as least would have returned home. I rather believe that the gracious young lady in her despair entered a convent in order to get rid of the scoundrel."

"That might easily be the case; but, if so, Dortie, during these many months, would certainly have written home, even if my Elsa, on account of her parents, should not have done it."

"Yes, sir, I believe it too; but if the priests in that neighborhood are like Anselm in Uhlenhorst, Dortie's letter did not get very far."

Thereupon he narrated his experience at Uhlenhorst.

"And did my godfather believe this priest rather than an honorable soldier?"

"No, sir! He is suffering severely from gout, and he is broken-hearted over the loss of his child. But late in the evening he sent me through Peter Lange a hundred dollars—all that he had in the house, together with a hearty greeting and the commission

to you to seek his child and to bring her home. He said that he would wait for her until his last gasp."

Thereupon Younker Hans arose from his invalid-chair, raised his arms and said:

"Now I have once more an aim in life and, with it, a desire to live; now I shall get well again."

It was a true word. When spring approached, he had entirely recovered, and was impatient to find traces of the lost. These, however, were so deplorably feeble that, in spite of months of speculation, he hardly knew where to make a start. Since, upon their return trip from Pavia, Hans had nowhere come upon the trail of the lost, it was evident to him that Kurt had taken an entirely different way over the Alps or had sojourned in entirely isolated places. The latter was really the case; for the astute Kurt wished to destroy every trace as much as possible. He still feared that his rival might recover. That was the reason that they had gone to that convent in Bavaria. It was the same convent at which Father Anselm had sojourned with his wards on the way to Rome. He had, in fact, made a little détour, in order to put up at a convent of his order and, should an opportunity present itself, to persuade the young woman to enter the convent then and there.

Hans and Hinnark at first took another road over the Alps. Of course, they learned nothing. Nor had anybody in Pavia ever heard anything again of the missing. Dejected, the knight and his squire traveled homeward again on the old road. Having traveled as far as Augsburg, with the last dollar their last hope of finding the missing in this way disappeared, too.

"In order not to die of starvation, there is nothing left for us but to enter the imperial service again," said the younker one day to his squire. "The Turks are carrying on in Hungary worse than ever; they may threaten even Germany. If Kurt is still living, I shall come across him in the army more easily than anywhere else. If I cannot then compel him to reveal

the abode of my Elsa, I can at least satisfy my revenge."

"That, very likely, will be best," thought Hinnark; "of course, I could find good wages here at my old trade and help you in this way."

"You stay with me, Hinnark, as your Dortie stayed with my Elsa. I have already spoken to a recruiting officer. I shall once more get a company, and you remain my squire."

"Then let us at least write home from here and give this tavern as our address, so that my father may notify us of the arrival of Dortie or of any other important news."

"That is a good idea, even if I do not believe that Dortie would undertake such a long journey alone. That is very difficult in our times for a decent girl. Of course, nobody knows whether they are far from home; but I believe this to be the case, since Dortie otherwise would have found an opportunity of writing or traveling home."

Hinnark, in consequence, wrote a long letter to his father, which arrived safely and was answered before the two soldiers started eastward with their company. The letter of the father brought much news, but not that which was desired above all others. Nothing had been heard as yet of Miss Elsa and Dortie at Uhlenhorst.

Meanwhile the time of waiting had grown very tedious for Dortie. When the second letter also remained unanswered, she grew suspicious of her surroundings, especially of the mother superior. She was not at all pleased that she was no longer allowed to speak with her mistress alone. Her experience in Rome had taught her what to expect from convent people. Thus the conviction matured in her that the messenger woman had suppressed the letters. She was always well fed in the convent, and, as compensation, she brought the nuns the latest news from the outside world, especially of the severe persecutions of the heretics in Bavaria. Toward herself the mes-

senger woman was as friendly as a cat whenever she asked for a letter from home. At length she resolved to go to a neighboring village, situated at a distance of a few miles from the convent. Since a post-office was connected with it, a letter could be transmitted from that place. True, she did not find this opportunity so soon as she had hoped. Several times the landlord drove to the village; but every time she asked the privilege of going along, on the plea that she would like to see the place, the landlord made all kinds of excuses. She soon observed that her landlord's refusal was not accidental, but that it was the result of a deliberate design to keep her out of the village. However, she did not mean to be baffled, although she acted as if she had dismissed the thought. Then, one Sunday afternoon, when the young people went to a church fair in a neighboring village, she secretly wrote a third letter to father Smid at Uhlenhorst and took it along to the fair. This village lay between her place and the town with the post-office, though the one was still a mile or two from the other. The whole company rode on a large rack-wagon. When the others went to the morning service, Dortie, without being observed, stepped aside and hastened away as fast as her feet could carry her. She hoped to return unnoticed, especially since many hundreds of guests from all the surrounding villages had come together, and the church was more than full.

She would indeed have succeeded, if a pair of eyes had not kept her under constant surveillance. Hansel, the son of the landlord, was in love with the beautiful girl, although she always treated him with coolness. As a matter of fact, his parents would not have given their approval to a union with so poor a girl; for this reason he had wisely kept his love to himself. On this morning the father had given him particular command to keep an eye on Dortie, so that she should not get acquainted with somebody from town through whom she might send word home. He explained his command by vouchsafing the informa-

tion that he had heard from the mother superior that Dortie's young mistress had a lover, who was a hopeless heretic. If he should learn the abode of the nun, he might disturb the peace of the convent and abduct the young nun as he had done once before in Rome. Therefore Hansel was greatly perturbed by the disappearance of Dortie during the service. Naturally he hoped for a while that she was concealed in some corner of the church. But when he found no trace of her after the service, he resolutely saddled one of his horses and galloped in the direction of the town.

Dortie had indeed observed that Hansel was watching her particularly and, therefore, took special pains to slip away from him unseen. With a joyful heart she marched through the waving grain fields. Come what might, she could no longer endure this uncertainty. Sometimes a dark mood was about to settle down upon her, as, quite forlorn, she walked through the strange region.

"Shall I ever see my native heath again?" she asked herself. "For more than two years we lie here in these Bavarian mountains as buried, and not a word had arrived from home. Could it be that the gloomy intuitions of my poor young mistress are justified after all? O dear God, do send me some message that the missing ones are living, and I will cheerfully wait longer."

The Lord heard her prayer. The desired information was to reach her much sooner than she had expected; for our God grants above all that we are able to ask or think.

Arriving in the little town, she went into the first inn, ordered something to eat, and then asked the old landlord about the post-office.

"Well, girl, what do you want at the post-office?" asked the old man, who could neither read nor write, having never had anything to do with the mails in all his life.

"I would like to drop a letter."

"Can you write?" the landlord asked with still

greater astonishment, "or are you performing messenger service today?"

"Certainly I can write," said Dortie, not without a touch of pride, and drew forth her letter.

"Curiously the old man took the letter in his hand, looked at the address and said:

"I couldn't make out a single word. To whom does the letter go? To be sure to your distant sweetheart, probably with the army before Vienna."

In spite of herself Dortie blushed, and to convince the friendly old man that she was not writing to her sweetheart, she read to him the whole address.

Raising his eyebrows, the old man stared at her and continued to repeat the name:

"Hinnark Smid? Hinnark Smid?"

Surprised, Dortie now looked up and asked quickly:

"Did you ever hear that name before?"

"Hinnark Smid, from Uhlenhorst in the Luneburg country, you say?"

"Yes, yes; were you ever up there?"

"No, no; but has Tailor Smid a son who is also called Hinnark?"

"I entreat you for God's sake to tell me whether you heard or saw anything of my Hinnark?" cried the girl, beside herself.

"What is the name of Hinnark's master?" asked the old man, who now became excited, also.

"Hans von Hasselbach," cried Dortie with a loud voice, while her heart beat as if it would burst.

"Oh, do tell me at least what you know of the two; did they spend a night here two years ago?"

Instead of giving the desired answer, the old man good-naturedly shouted into the kitchen:

"Mother, come here!"

After considerable time, which seemed to the poor girl like an eternity, the fat landlady stepped out of the kitchen, and, displeased with the interruption of her work, she answered:

"What do you want this time?"

"What is the name of the sick knight who lay in our house the whole winter?"

"You ought to know it yourself. His name is Hans von Hasselbach."

Dortie's loud scream interrupted her. The girl ran up to her, seized her two hands, and pleaded:

"Oh, do tell me all! is the knight still living, and his squire, Hinnark Smid?"

"Well, whence do you know these two? Were you not born in this section? I thought right away that you had a different speech."

Patience never was a special virtue of our Dortie, but such a test of patience she had never been compelled to endure. Very gradually she learned the astonishing news, which caused her to shout for joy, that the younker had been cared for at that place until his squire Hinnark had returned from the journey to his home. Then the two had ridden away to seek the lost maiden, whom they rightly thought to be in some convent.

"Thanks and praise to God forever!" said the girl when the account was finished. "Will you now drop my letter in the post-office tomorrow? It is addressed to the father of my Hinnark. At home they will be concerned about us."

"I certainly will, girl," good-naturedly the old man replied. "There is a possibility at least for you to get your sweetheart restored to you, even though your mistress has become a bride of heaven, and Younker Hans has to do without her. He always had such gloomy thoughts, the poor younker, while your sweetheart always showed courage."

With a grateful heart to God and the tavern people, Dortie finally went away. She had stayed longer than she had intended; but what a change had taken place within her in that time! She had to relieve the fullness of her heart by a joyful song as soon as she had left the town behind her. However, in the middle of the first stanza she suddenly broke off, for around the corner a rider was coming, whom she

well knew. He stopped his horse and shouted to her in anger:

"Why do you run away from the fair and loiter about town?"

Dortie hesitated a moment with the answer. Was it love that had prompted Hansel to follow her or, rather, jealousy, or had he been sent to prevent her interchange of letters with her home? As quietly as possible she answered:

"For a long time already I have wanted to see the town; so I just walked over."

"A rotten excuse," answered Hansel. "Where were you at dinner?"

"Over at the inn; if you really had wished to seek me, you could have found me. I am going home with you."

"I will first take a drink. In riding so fast I got warm; you may go ahead slowly. As a punishment you will have to give me every dance after we get back, even if you are ever so tired."

With these words Hansel galloped away. For a moment Dortie stood irresolute; should it be possible that Hansel was after her letter? At all events he would reach the inn before her; and even were she there herself, she could not deny him speech. It would be best for her to say nothing at all about it; if the mother superior was back of it, even her entreaties would avail nothing, because, naturally, the landlord was a Catholic and would not venture to act against the church. Thus she walked along slowly; the song had died on her lips, but, instead, requests coupled with thanksgiving mounted from the heart to the throne of grace.

"Above all I must now get this great news to my lady," she thought as she walked along. "But how shall I reach her, and how will she receive the good message? Before she took the veil, she would have shouted for joy because of it, like myself; but what will she do now, being a nun? I know, of course, that in Lutheran sections many monks and nuns have left

the cloisters. Luther himself has not hesitated to take a nun for his wife; but Elsa is ignorant of Lutheran doctrine, which declares the cloister life to be unbiblical. As for me, I believe that I should take French leave, had I entered the cloister under such misapprehensions; but my young mistress is too timid in these matters. I fear, even if Younker Hans should rap at the cloister door, he would not get her out so easily as he did in Rome. But all these cares lie at a distance; my immediate care must be to get the message to her."

And this immediate care was really so absorbing that Hansel had already attained her side before she had thought it all out. He gave her a shy look, afraid that she would insist on his telling the truth. Since he really liked her, he did not wish to hurt her, hoping, like all lovers, that something would turn up to break the resistance of his parents to his union with the girl. Dortie noticed the shy look, and it told her enough: even her third letter would not reach home. However, in the joyful frame of mind in which she found herself this did not depress her. She tossed her head back until her long braids fairly sailed, and said to herself:

"At the first opportunity I will escape and carry the news home myself."

She had not the least idea how she could accomplish such an almost impossible journey, for she was all alone; but, cheered, she told herself:

"The dear Lord, who today brought me this wonderful message, will open for me the homeward way. My first care is, to get the wonderful news to my mistress."

Of course, with all her ingenuity she did not hit upon a feasable plan, particularly since she had to entertain Hansel while she was planning. His heart grew much lighter when Dortie just acted as if she harbored no suspicion toward him whatever. He was less concerned about the welfare of the church than his own. Having learned from the people in the

tavern that Dortie had a lover, a fine, strong soldier, he rejoiced that he had her letter in his pocket. Thus her old sweetheart could never find the girl, and he might keep her for himself. Being desperately in love, he never considered what an act of cruelty he was committing.

"You certainly are tired from your silly junket to the town," he said in a friendly tone. "That way you will be a poor partner for me at the dance at the fair. Get behind me on the horse."

She accepted the invitation. It might be very convenient some time to have Hansel for a friend. With a strong arm he helped her mount, then they went toward the fair. Dortie had to force herself to chat with Hansel; for she continually reflected how she could get the great message to her young mistress. She might whisper a short sentence in low-German in the very presence of the lady superior; but the shock of surprise could not be hidden in that case from the watchful nun. She herself had been entirely beside herself on receiving the message, notwithstanding the fact that she had always believed that they should see each other again. What a shock it would be to her mistress to receive the news of his deliverance, having believed her lover dead! No, that would not do; but how could she get it to her? Her head was was usually inventive; but this time it absolutely would not suggest anything sensible. Therefore she secretly folded her hands behind the back of Hansel and prayed:

"Dear Lord, I do not know my way out; be Thou my adviser as to a way of bringing help to my poor mistress."

Immediately afterward they passed the first house of the village, and the first thing that Dortie noticed was a short ladder leaning against the barn. Like a flash the thought came to her:

"That's the way; with a ladder I can scale the high cloister walls and reach the little window of my mistress. It is a good thing that I have identified it

on a previous occasion; it is the third from the south end."

She was so excited over her idea that she almost failed to hear Hansel's direction to dismount:

"Well, get off, and go over to the green, while I put up the horse; there will be no end to the teasing."

Trying to be self-contained, she did as commanded. She noticed to her joy that her companions had not at all missed her in the confusion. As to Hansel, she humored him and displayed such mirth that the young people began to whisper:

"In the end the tavern keeper may have to accept the poor stranger anyway as his daughter-in-law.

As soon as possible she made another visit in the cloister, where she was received with even greater coolness than formerly. The mother superior now knew what danger was threatening from this girl, and did not leave her alone for one moment. While this confirmed Dortie's suspicion that her letter had been intercepted she gave no hint of her suspicions. When, having to go, she gave her mistress the usual farewell kiss she whispered into her ear in low-German:

"Stay at the window tonight."

The mother superior did not hear this, nor did she notice the slight tremor of the young nun, who turned quickly aside after Dortie's words.

The nun returned to her cell, but there was no rest for her that day. What plan did the daring girl have in view? Would she really venture to scale the wall for the purpose of talking to her? To be sure, she, too, desired intercourse with her trusted servant, and could not at all conceive why this only earthly joy was denied her. Should the reason possibly be that Dortie might have no opportunity of speaking to her about her old earthly love? Could love for a dead person in any way injure her soul? But why did Dortie wish to speak to her just today, and, in the attempt, court serious danger? If she were caught, a beating or imprisonment would be the least punish-

ment to expect. Dortie must certainly know that; or could she possibly have received news from her Hinnark? Yes, that must be it. In that case Dortie would leave her entirely, and follow her betrothed northward.

The young nun drew a deep sigh at that moment. Her desired end in the cloister seemed to be rather distant, for she was entirely well again. At times, when the unavoidable ennui of cloister life seized her, the thought would arise in her unbidden:

"How much better had it been had I gone home to care for my old father, rather than spend my years here doing nothing." She lacked entirely the self-righteous Roman superstition of the meritoriousness of her self-chosen calling. In spite of all the efforts of the priest and her mother superior, she had not become a true nun, but was a simple child of God that had found peace through faith in her dear Savior. The sisters tried to while away the time through all kinds of gossip, but this became a burden to her more and more. Tears came to her eyes when she thought of the possibility of even her faithful Dortie, her servant and friend, leaving her all alone in a strange land. She could not and would not lay any obstacle in the way of Dortie's good fortune, who had already done and suffered so much for her. But what should become of her without Dortie? At the common meal and also at the devotions she could hide her inner unrest only by dint of strong effort. With feverish impatience she awaited the evening.

Dortie waited until about eleven o'clock, when the last guests had left the tavern. Then she said good night to the landlord and went to her chamber. Here she fell on her knees and implored the blessing of God upon her dangerous undertaking and, also, upon her dear mistress. Then she quietly stole into the yard, took the light ladder and went out into the dark night. Hearing the night-watchman toot at the other end of the village, she knew that he, accordingly,

was not in her way; and no one else was accustomed to walk the streets of the quiet village at night.

Successfully, therefore, she reached the convent garden and leaned her ladder against the wall, which was of the same height as the ladder. Her heart throbbed violently as she mounted to the top of the wall, pulled the ladder after her, and then descended upon the other side. She had to lean against the wall for a moment to gather strength and breath for her further understanding. Timidly she listened for signs of anybody's approach, but nothing was heard. Then she took the ladder under her arm once more and crept along the paths of the convent garden to the spot of light reflected by the window of her mistress. Nervously she counted the windows once more to safeguard against a mistake, when she noticed to her great joy that the window above her was gently opened. In a moment she was now at the window, where the hand of her mistress was stretched toward her through the bars. She covered it with kisses, and soon noticed how it trembled from excitement.

"For God's sake, Dortie, what gets you into this dangerous undertaking?" she heard her mistress whisper: "Are you going to leave me?"

The voice of her mistress, all but choked by tears, told Dortie what the loss of her would mean to the young noblewoman. She was touched to the heart by the love that it revealed. She had long considered how she could most tenderly break the news, without, however, coming to a conclusion in the matter. Finally she said, likewise in the gentlest whisper:

"My dear mistress, I have a great, beautiful message, which our dear Lord has brought me in a wonderful way; are you strong enough to hear it without betraying yourself?"

The young nun, whose excitement by this time had become all but unsupportable, pressed her hands upon her heart, which seemed ready to burst. Finally she answered:

"I will try, Dortie. O my poor heart! I thought

it should find rest in the convent. But what can cause it distress now, since my lover has been murdered?"

With the last words she sought to quiet herself; for at Dortie's words of the great, beautiful message, the thought had come to her unbidden!

"Should my Hans still be alive?" It was that which made her heart beat so violently. But it could not be! Probably it was well she herself had conceived the thought while doubts still suppressed it. Accordingly she was somewhat prepared when Dortie, forgetting all caution, rejoined:

"But he was not murdered, only severely wounded; he lives and seeks you."

The twitching hands of the nun seized the iron bars of her window to hold herself; for she was ready to swoon. Perceiving this, Dortie took hold of the two hands, so that her poor mistress might not sink to the floor. At the same time the girl whispered what was at the same time a plea and a rebuke:

"Oh, do come to! you have borne the severest blows with courage; should now joy kill you?"

Finally the nun raised her head with a deep sigh, and said:

"For me there is no more joy, even though my lover lives—only endless unrest, endless regret; for I am a nun, a bride of heaven, who already sins when she merely thinks of a living man. But say, whence did you get this news, which, according to your words, I may not doubt?"

"Younker Hans spent all winter in the little town yonder after receiving those wounds. In the meantime Hinnark was at home, but got no information about us. In the spring they rode away to search for us."

"Oh, what a fate!" now groaned the young nun in a voice so loud as to prompt the frightened Dortie to reach through the bars and put her hand upon her mouth.

She became calmer, but continued to sob, while the tears streamed down her face:

"So near, and yet so far! and now, since I know that he lives, he is still separated from me forever through the step I, in my despair, have taken. O my Lord Jesus, do not permit me utterly to sink into despair! I now feel that the vow that made me a nun is a great lie; for my heart belongs to my Hans, and never can I forget him. Oh, if we only both had died! It would have been better than to be consumed by longing, by sinful longing."

Dortie had expected such a burst of passion, and had already considered how to meet it. And she struck the right course when she answered:

"You were often wondering whether Younker Hans would have been saved had he died in his unbelief. Probably the dear Lord has permitted you to live to bring him to a saving faith."

"Dortie, that was a good word; from now on it shall be my chief duty to pray for his soul. After all, this poor life is only a span of time when compared with blessed eternity."

"In the northern part of Germany many monks and nuns have fled from the cloister," rejoined Dortie. "Dr. Luther himself, according to my information, married a nun."

"Lead me not into temptation, Dortie!" replied the nun, raising her hands in defense. "Voluntarily I took the veil; how can I ever break my vow?"

"You did it in despair over the supposed death of your lover, and to escape from that hateful Younker Kurt, the assassin."

"All that cannot undo my oath, cannot annul my vow."

"Perhaps I can secure for you writings of the pious Dr. Luther, which will change your mind. You yourself consider him to be a real man of God, and believe his teaching about the forgiveness of sins by grace alone, for Christ's sake. He certainly has found good arguments in the Word of God against monastic vows; otherwise he never would have married a nun himself."

"Probably she entered the convent against her will, while I went voluntarily. And how would you secure writings of Luther for me here in this ultra-Catholic country, where heretics are persecuted and killed, as the mother superior just told us yesterday again?"

"I am not going to remain here."

"I feared that all day; then I shall be entirely alone. But I will not keep you; you have already done and suffered so much for me that I can never reward you for it. But how are you going to get away, and how will you undertake the long, dangerous journey? How, in fact, did you get into the little town?"

"How I am going to get away and make the long journey alone, I do not as yet myself know; God will certainly show me a way. Probably mercenaries will sometime pass through this section. They will travel northward and take me along as a sutler. Before winter I cannot think of starting, in any event; but when spring comes, if they have not found us, I shall leave, even if I must take the risk all alone. I went to the little town from the fair in the neighboring village to send a letter home."

"Do you really think that it has a better chance of arriving than the others, which you sent from here?"

"It will not arrive, either, because it is already in the hands of the mother superior, like the rest."

"What do you say? In the hands of our mother superior?"

"Yes; the messenger woman, no doubt, brought her the first two, and the son of the inn-keeper followed me on Sunday; early Monday he came to the convent with a letter."

"Do you know all that with certainty?"

"It is as good as certain. That is explained by the fact that my letters were never answered, and Hansel, who is somewhat in love with me, could not

conceal what he had done, although he did not admit it."

"So that is the reason that the mother superior gave us such a tirade Monday noon. She said that the Lutheran heresy was spreading; that even some nuns had been deceived, and that, to satisfy their fleshly lusts, they have fled from the convent. This was the worst sin that could be committed; for such the severest punishments of purgatory were too mild. They could be punished only by everlasting damnation. Fortunately Bavaria still had a government which was not afraid to cut off such dead limbs from the tree of the church and to consign them to the stake."

"She fears that Younker Hans might come and get you out, as he has already done once before."

"She need not be concerned. Today my conscience holds me more securely than chains and bands and cloister walls could ever do it," said the young nun, sighing.

The loud note of the night-watchman's horn, who had come as far as the convent, announced the hour of midnight. Frightened, Miss Elsa said:

"Dortie, I must go to chapel. The little convent bell will soon call to devotions. But where shall you stay? The dog of the night watchman is barking; he has discovered your track."

Dortie, likewise, was frightened; but she collected her wits quickly and said:

"Go quickly, and act as though nothing had happened. I will hide in the garden till the old night watchman is gone; he will not pay much attention to the barking of his dog. Before I leave, I will come to your window once more, and about the same hour as today. If the mother superior should prevent my whispering something to you, I will just stare at you and quickly close my eyes three times. Then you know that I am coming. Now do not grieve unduly; God can still bring all this confusion to a happy end."

At this moment the little cloister bell rang; the young nun leaned forward, grasped Dortie's head, and

kissed her repeatedly. Thereupon she quickly closed her window and followed the other nuns to the chapel. Her head was bowed low, so that no one could peer into her eyes. Nobody really looked at her, and in the sleepless hours of the night she could afterward meditate upon what she had heard, and, likewise, many a night to come. The resolution, made the instant she was informed that Hans was living, remained unbroken; she could never belong to Hans. But her heart bled and would not be pacified. The thought suggested by Dortie, that she might leave the convent with a good conscience, seemed to her too good to be true. By strict observance of her duties she sought to quiet her heart; but she did not succeed. While the useless brooding of former days had already made her heart heavy, the situation was now even more burdensome. How gladly she would have poured out her heart to her confessor; but for Dortie's sake she did not dare to do that. Of course, according to Romish doctrine, this constituted an even greater burden upon her conscience, and she became very unhappy.

Dortie had had rather smooth sailing. She had calculated rightly that the old, half-deaf night-watchman would pay little attention to the bark of his dog; after standing still for a short time, the old fellow passed on. The girl waited until she heard him tooting in a distant street; then she crept homeward and got safely to bed, without having been observed by anyone. She folded her hands for a short prayer of thanksgiving to God, who had helped her so graciously, repeated the Lord's Prayer, and with the last petition she had already dropped into a sound sleep. She had never heard or seen anything about nerves, and the future appeared to her sunny temperament in the rosiest light, in spite of all the theatening clouds glooming between her and her Hinnark.

CHAPTER XI.

On the Walls of Vienna.

EMPEROR CHARLES had won a glorious victory over the pope and the king of France. At the Diet of Spires his position appeared vastly better than a few years before, when the Evangelical element was conciliated by the mild resolution of the Diet, that, in matters of religion, every man should act as he thought he could account to his God and his Imperial Majesty. At Spires, however, the emperor, through his representative, demeaned himself almost as an absolute monarch; and the Catholic rulers, who constituted the great majority, scarcely dared to whisper, since the opposition to the Evangelical element met their heartiest desire.

Dr. John Faber, the vicar general of Constance, a former friend of Melanchthon's, was the court preacher of King Ferdinand and a tried "heretic hammer." His former fight against the indulgence fraud he had long since forgotten, having branded the Lutherans in his sermons at Spires as worse than the Turks, while he declared the holy teachers of the church to be more trustworthy than the Bible itself.

The emperor, in his rescript of the fifteenth of March, proceeded with the utmost severity against all church innovations. Every act of insubordination against ecclesiastical or secular authority was forbidden under penalty of the ban; likewise the proselyting of members of the "true faith." The mild decrees of the former diet of Spires were thus annulled by an imperial edict.

This was the language of an absolute monarch, who was unmindful of the fact that, a few years before, the estates of the Realm had foisted upon him the Council of Regency. The majority of the representatives in their popish fanaticism merely ventured to

tone down the rescript in so far that not every change should be forbidden till the holding of the next General Council. Even in this form, it could not be acceptable to the Evangelical estates, unless they should be willing to give up the churchly independence so recently attained. The Evangelical party was to tolerate the Catholics, but the Catholics were not bound to tolerate those of the Evangelical faith.

On April 19th, 1529, the resolution above mentioned was passed by a majority of the Diet, whereupon the imperial representatives immediately approved it and departed. The few Evangelical estates who protested against it, were derisively called Protestants. "We ought to obey God rather than men," was the fundamental note sounding in the protest of Spires, and in many subsequent ones.

The Nuremberg theologians wrote: "If we fear the imperial ban, we ought to fear still more the ban of God." The Burgomaster of Memmingen wrote that since God was stronger than the world, they would elect him as their Captain. Of course, the poor, timid Melanchthon felt "extinguished, half dead from fright," over the daring protest.

Luther felt no fear; for his trust in God was firm as a rock. But he had every reason to mistrust the high political plans of the landgrave Philip of Hesse, who, in spite of all difference of doctrine, wished to make a political and religious treaty with the Zwinglians. The Marburg Colloquy indeed took place through the efforts of the landgrave; but, as Luther had seen in advance, the schism could not be healed; it rather became worse. Luther was in no sense a politician; at the same time he was more loyal to the emperor, and a much better German patriot than many princes at that day. Philip of Hesse, and even the Catholic family of Wittelsbach, were negotiating with the Hungarian rival king Zapolya, an ally of the Turk. Luther, however, raised his mighty voice in true German tones against the dreadful enemy of all Christendom, who was preparing to over-

run all Hungary, and even to take Vienna. Luther willingly made a financial contribution to the country's defense against this Turkish foe; whereupon he wrote and sang as we still sing today:

"Lord, by Thy Word deliv'rance work,
And stay the hand of Pope and Turk!"

Never had distress been greater. Solyman the Magnificent, a mighty prince, called himself "the Shadow of God over two Worlds," and laid claim to the government over the whole world as his right. Emperor Charles had tried in vain to make a treaty with the Shah of Persia. From the other direction the King of France was pursuing the emperor; the Venetians were at the beck and call of the Turk, and Vienna was almost denuded of defenders. In the spring of 1529, Solyman started from Constantinople with an army of two hundred and fifty thousand men. On the battle-field of Mohacz, where, those years before, Solyman had routed the Christian army and slain its commander, King Louis of Hungary, he received homage from Zapolya, prince of Transylvania, who himself would readily have become king of Hungary. Ofen, feebly defended, surrendered to the Grand Vizier Ibrahim. On the 21st of September, the renowned advance guard of the Turkish army, notorious for their fondness for speed and arson, were seen before Vienna, and soon the whole city was surrounded by the mighty army of the Sultan. Vienna taken, there would be no more obstacle to an advance into the heart of Germany, there being no force, no army, which could long resist such a host. After a second battle, Solyman could overrun all Christendom even as far as France. At the same time Solyman was a much more dangerous enemy of Christianity than Attila, the Gentile King, being filled with Mohammedan fanaticism, which prompted him to look down upon "the Christian dogs" with contempt. Today yet the Mohammedan is the most dangerous enemy of Christianity, though his political power is broken.

According to the report of its own commander Vienna was a rambling, insecure place, only partly covered with buildings, poorly supplied with food, and defended by no more than twenty thousand troops. It seemed to be lost; but God did not wish this poor, rent Christian world to share the destiny of West Asia and North Africa, where the Church had utterly perished. The heroic courage of the little band of defenders, commanded by the Count Palatine Philip, a brother of Count Nicholas of Salm, has always been justly admired.

They not only had to contend with a force twelve times their own number, but also to fight against the veterans of the Turkish army. The forming of the Janizary host was one of the most inhuman cruelties of the fiendish Turks. Every few years Turkish officers would range through the villages and towns of their Christian subjects. They would gather all boys of from five to twelve years of age. Then they would select the finest and strongest of them and drag them to Constantinople, where by a strict discipline, resembling that of monks, they were reared to the most bitter enmity against the Christians and the fiercest enthusiasm for the Turkish cause. Imagine the anguish of Christian parents to be obliged to surrender their very heart-blood for their own oppression! This toll of blood accounts in large measure for the military supremacy of the Turks in those centuries.

The iron discipline of the Turkish infantry was always admirable. As chief weapon they carried an arquebuse, and a crooked sword; as ornaments they wore heron plumes on their high turbans of white felt. The Mohammedans had the fatalistic belief that Allah had predetermined the day of every man's death, and that every one who died in battle against the infidels would pass directly into paradise. This made them exceedingly daring in battle. Moreover, since everything was permitted against the enemy, they could satisfy their lust and their cruelty to the

utmost—another reason for their enthusiasm and cruelty in battle.

Eventually, God, in His wisdom, used this bloody Janizary scourge, plotted by devilish Turkish cruelty against Christendom, against their own masters. Having been greatly humored for a while, because they deserved well of the State for their services, this Turkish guard finally took liberties with the Sultan himself. Again and again they mutinied against their ruler, the monarch of all the faithful and the follower of the Prophet, and compelled him to do their bidding. This often led to bloody battles. Sultan Mahmud II., at the beginning of the last century, finally put a stop to all this; for he disbanded the old troop after bloody battles. The downfall of the Turkish Empire, which had begun long before, was hastened by this event. At the time of our story, however, the Janizaries were on the pinnacle of their fame as an invincible host. Contemptuously they marched against the infidels, ever prone to retreat. The dilapidated walls of Vienna with their scattered defenders seemed to them an easy prey.

Here we meet our friends again. With a little troop of Count Palatine Philip, also Younker Hans and his Hinnark had hastened to the defense of Vienna. When Father Smid's letter brought no news from the missing women, Younker Hans inquired with a bitter laugh:

"Hinnark, where is your God now, if, with all his omniscience and omnipotence, He is not even able to find a poor nun in the German realm, and to lead her back to her lover?"

"The sun has not yet set for good," answered the pious squire. "Perhaps we are first to fight out our battle with Younker Kurt."

"It is my only comfort that I may find him in the army and compel him to make an acknowledgment of his deed. If I do not succeed in this, I hope that some Janizary sword may cleave my skull."

"O my dear master, beware of such blasphemy! God might let your wicked wish come true."

"Would it please you better if, like King Saul, I should fall upon my own sword? What is there left for me in the world? Shall I slowly grieve to death?"

In this frame of mind Hans had come to Vienna. He had soon learned the names of all the officers of the garrison, but that of Kurt was not among them. In spite of the most diligent search he could find no one who had seen him for several years, although several old soldiers remembered him from former years.

"Should it be possible that this contemptible knave has taken my Elsa by force to the castle of some robber baron, a man after his own heart?"

This thought had often come to him, but once more Hinnark was able to dissipate his fear.

"Master, do not worry about that matter! Younker Kurt was first of all after the rich inheritance. And my Dortie would rather have thrust her dirk into the rascal's heart than suffered such an infamy. Believe me that Anselm the priest knows the abode of your betrothed. I read that too plainly upon his face. I confidently hope that in some way my Dortie will still get word to us.

If we safely escape the Turks, we will go home together. Who knows what has happened in the meantime? Probably you can get more out of the tricky priest than I could. He cannot turn you down so easily; meanwhile be on your guard against the chief danger, exposure to hostile weapons."

The last warning was certainly necessary. In his despairing frame of mind Hans had begged the Count Palatine to assign him the most dangerous place, since he no longer cared for his life.

"I can accommodate you," he said; "but do not be unduly rash. We need every courageous man, and, in comparison with death, life is sweeter, after all. Many a grouch has found that out, and you are

no exception. In spite of your impetuous bravery, keep your eyes open!"

In the heat of conflict his despairing frame of mind really passed away by degrees. The German, if not the Christian, heart of the younker began to stir when, all around, he saw the burning villages and heard the mocking yells of the Janizaries. Now it was necessary to fulfill a high duty and to prevent immeasurable harm; every personal grief had to yield to the country's need. Not being able to fight on horseback for the time being, they had to mount the walls. According to the Younker's wish, he and Hinnark were posted at one of the weakest places, where the wall lay in ruins.

In one respect at least the besieged had the advantage over their enemy, in weapons. They had cannon with which to fight, and also Hans and Hinnark had to learn the management of artillery. In addition, the Younker kept his men busily engaged in filling bags with sand, which at night were placed upon the wall, so that the fire of the enemy accomplished little. A number of attacks were successfully repulsed, and the over-confident enemy learned what power lay hidden in these despised Germans. Man against man, the Germans were at all times superior even to the savage Janizary. Their derisive comments upon German prowess came to an end when they saw with what ease a certain prisoner moved among them in his coat of mail, which at first had merely roused their ridicule.

The Christians, with equal skill, knew how to spring the Turkish mines, so that the siege made no advance. While, in the course of time, the superior numbers of the enemy and hunger would naturally have overcome the brave garrison, the autumnal temperature gradually proved too much for the sons of the South. To use the words of a Turkish historian, "Germany being the residence of the Shah of Winter and the homeland of frosts and cold, the minds of the champions of Islam became depressed."

On the 14th of October, Hans and Hinnark observed a great commotion just opposite them. The band which had been encamped there for weeks, and suffered a great reduction in numbers through unsuccessful attacks upon the walls, was joined by a large number of other Janizaries under the leadership of a knight clad in a coat of mail.

"If appearances do not deceive me," said Younker Hans, "there comes a renegade, one of those knaves who, for the sake of money and earthly profit, bring shame upon the Christian name and join the Moslem faith. Men, we will show him what German faithfulness and German fists are able to do. We are their target today. That rascal there is certainly acquainted with Vienna, and he knows that this is the weakest place. Let him come; he shall not complain about the warmth of his reception."

"Sir, do you see the squire at the side of the knight? Now they are leaping from their horses in order to lead the storm column. Do you see his long red beard? Could that be Caspar?"

"That would be—!" exclaimed the younker, startled and grasping his lance more firmly.

"I almost believe that you are right. Both of them wear a turban over the helmet, but their size corresponds with what we know of them. Ah, should I in vain have sought him throughout Germany to meet him here? Yes, that must be he; he looks like him. But, Hinnark, could he have dragged the girls to Venice and put them in a ship, where he now keeps them as in a harem?"

Boiling hot this last thought arose in the heart of the younker. Hinnark was occupied with his cannon; he did not hear the question. Carefully aiming, he said:

"The distance is rather great, but I believe that I can hit the renegade."

Already he had his hand upon the fuse, when his master pulled it away and said hurriedly:

"First he must confess where he has taken my Elsa."

"All right, then," said Hinnark. "I almost believe I should have made my mark today as a cannoneer."

The sharp eyes of Hinnark and Hans had made no mistake. When Younker Kurt had given up all hope of ever being united with his cousin, he finally, after much wandering, reappeared in Italy, where, with his cheating at the gaming-table, he, after all, had had the best income. But this time success did not attend him.

In Venice he had casually met a renegade by the name of Gritti, a Venetian, who was a Mohammedan and quite well acquainted with the Grand Vizier in Constantinople. Now Kurt had found his man: Gritti did not need to picture to him at length the glories of harem life awaiting him at the court of the sultan. Younker Kurt had no more faith, honor, and country to lose. In Constantinople he was received with open arms; for renegades of the nobility, who could render a good service in the projected march upon Germany were somewhat scarce. In Constantinople this debauched knight could satisfy his passions to the limit. Of course, he was no more a credit to his new faith than he had been to the Christian faith: he knew how to get the forbidden wine; and, when he was unobserved, he did not think of engaging in the prescribed exercises of prayer and purification. He rejoiced at the thought of war; he did not doubt for a moment that this immense army would capture Vienna, since he was acquainted there and knew how poorly it was prepared for a long siege. On this occasion he trusted to attract the attention of the sultan by his military knowledge and to win fame and money.

When the uselessness of the past assaults had become apparent, he drew the attention of the sultan to the weak spot in the wall, where Younker Hans was in command for the time being. He offered to

storm that place himself, if sufficient troops were put at his disposal.

"You may select the men yourself," was the answer of the sultan. "If you succeed in gaining an entrance there, I will make you a pasha."

Although the wall at that place had already suffered severely, the renegade had another half dozen cannon brought to this place, which were operated for hours, until the wall was a mass of debris, which could be surmounted without ladders. Not until then did the storm begin, which was undertaken simultaneously at many points.

The few cannon of Younker Hans had responded as effectively as was possible in the circumstances; several of his men fell on the occasion.

When it had become quite clear to him that the enemy was concentrating their fire upon that point, Hans sent a swift messenger for help to the Count Palatine. But the commander replied:

"The last reserves are already on the wall; let Ensign von Hasselbach make good his proud boast and defend the dangerous post to the last man!"

When the deadly fire suddenly ceased, and the Janizaries, savagely shouting: "Allah! Allah!" leaped from the trenches, Hans called to his men:

"Now give the cannon a rest; it is too late in any event to reload. Duck behind the wall! When they have discharged their arquebuses once more, take hold of the rampart guns, but do not shoot until they are within ten steps. Then stand to the last man, for your faith and your country!" Almost involuntarily this last clause escaped from the poor skeptic's lips; but he realized what courage the Christian faith gave his men at this supreme moment. Following his command, the men put powder on the pans of the rampart guns and knelt, ready to fire.

Hinnark alone requested:

"Sir, permit me to load once more; I believe I can make it."

With these words he had already pushed the

swab into the cannon and jerked it out again with a mighty effort. His master, however, warned him:

"You can't make it, Hinnark; they are too near; you will only expose yourself to the fire." The shout "Allah" of the assembling Turks filling the air, Hinnark could hardly understand his master; at least he paid no attention. Having left the cannon where the recoil had thrown it, he rammed the charge of powder into it; instead of a heavy ball he loaded a heavy sack of chopped lead into it, a charge he had saved for the Turk against the last terrible phase of the assault.

"Down, Hinnark, down!" he heard his master yell.

This time he plainly heard the voice; for the dreadful scream "Allah" had stopped all of a sudden. The same moment he dropped down behind his cannon, and just at the right time. The Janizaries had suddenly stopped at the foot of the wall, and discharged their arquebuses, which would have been a mere hindrance in climbing. Fortunately they did little harm, the defenders having ducked behind the battered wall as best they could. The first one to arise again was Hinnark; he pulled out the heavy ramrod, poured powder on the pan and, by the help of a comrade, he aimed the cannon as low as possible. It was done in the nick of time. His comrades had already discharged their guns and stretched out dozens of the assailants. But ten times as many came rushing on, climbing the wall, with their yataghans between their teeth. Already the first were in a hand-to-hand fight with the defenders on top of the wall, spurred on by the leader, who stood at the foot of the wall and continued to send up new crowds. He had hoped to bear down the few defenders quickly. Already he saw himself rewarded by the sultan with a pashalic. Later he might even storm Elsa's convent and drag her into his harem.

All at once, while Kurt was indulging in such amiable thoughts, there was a fearful explosion: at

the most critical moment Hinnark had been able to send off his greeting of lead. Its effect was dreadful. About fifty Turks—all who had stood in the range of the weapon, rolled, bleeding, down the wall, dragging the few with them who had not been struck. Even the savage Janizaries had enough and wanted to flee. Their desperate leader, however, who knew very well that the greatest danger was passed, drove them back to the assault, sword in hand, and was about to place himself at the head of the column. He had by that time acquired sufficient Turkish to explain the situation to them, and soon the old fanatical courage burned again. He had perceived the knight upon the wall; but as the latter had lowered his visor he could not recognize him, and Hinnark he had not seen. The courage of the Christians was aroused to the utmost by Hinnark's capital shot. Moreover, inasmuch as they had a stable position on top of the rampart, each one could handle several enemies. When halfway up, Younker Kurt cautiously permitted his men to take the lead again, his heavy coat of mail serving as explanation why he followed behind. Caspar, as always, was close by his side. Suddenly the later shouted to the knight:

"Sir, there on the wall stands Hinnark Smid beside his master."

Hinnark was covered by nothing but the customary head-gear of the mercenaries, so that Caspar could recognize his face. Just when Hinnark looked down, he observed that he was recognized. Caspar by no means desired an open battle with the strong smith, least of all when in so unfavorable a position. For a moment his master seemed likewise thunderstruck when he saw his rival before him, armed to the teeth and robust as ever, in spite of the all but mortal wounds he had dealt him. Now resentment and wild, bitter rage awoke in him. At last he could execute vengeance. Even if he should fall, the rival's heart should not fail to receive a mortal wound.

"In no event will you tell him where the young

lady is," he called to Caspar. "Confine your blows to him!"

With this he followed his men, who were by that time in the thickest of the fight. He did not need to wait long until he came up with his opponent; for no saber in a Turkish hand was a match for the knightly sword wielded by Hans. With dreadful thrusts and blows, seconded by the stalwart Hinnark, who never passed from his side, he sent one Turk after another down the wall. Presently the old enemies stood face to face and eye to eye, and it seemed as if fire were flashing through their visors.

"What have you done with my Elsa?" shouted Younker Hans with all his might.

In spite of the wild din of battle his opponent seemed to have understood him; for he answered with a coarse laugh, in which Caspar joined:

"Put her in my harem," Younker Hans thought he had understood him to say; then the swords continued the conversation. The astute Kurt had marshalled around him several of the strongest Turks, to all of whom he had pointed out the knight, and they had understood him well. Hinnark leaped upon Caspar. With the long spear, which he had laid down for some such emergency beside the cannon and now seized for his attack upon his assailant, he struck the old scoundrel until the point pierced his coat of mail. He would have killed Caspar, had he not with a quick stroke severed the shaft of the spear. Notwithstanding, the force of the assault appeared to hurl Caspar over backward. In fact, however, Caspar had cast himself backward, to fall rather gently and to bring presently up at the foot of the wall. If the Turks conquered, he could still get over the wall early enough, and if the Christians won, he could run away. His master he had seen go down at the same time as himself, felled by the tremendous blows of Younker Hans. What was the use therefore to sacrifice himself? If his master were only wounded slightly as he himself was, he would not fail to get to his feet again

at the proper time; if he were heavily wounded, he could be of no service to him in any event.

The latter was indeed the case. The helmet of Kurt was broken, and it was not without cause that he lay so quiet at the foot of the rampart. Deep the sword of the rival had bitten into his vitals.

The fall of their leader served to terrify the Janizaries. In spite of all the promised joys of paradise they rather preferred life on earth. Every effort was in vain anyway; they could not cope with these desperate Christian dogs. As rapidly as they had come, they hastened away again, for fear of possible bullets as farewell greetings. Also Caspar was among the fleeing. Scarcely had he observed the turn the battle had taken when he gathered himself up; casting a hasty glance at the wound in his master's head, he rushed away, one of the first in the stampede.

His flight did not escape Hinnark's eyes. His first thought was to leap after him and to cut him down, but a second thought told him that in this way he would expose himself to the enemy alone and, at the same time, run the risk of failure. Now he sprang to his cannon again; calling to his comrades to help him, the weapon was loaded in a short time. Meanwhile the fleeing Turks and Caspar had gotten very near to their breastworks, but Hinnark's eye did not need to search long: Caspar's German outfit was a sufficient mark for identification in spite of his turban. Hinnark had aimed well; the heavy ball tore off the entire head of the wretch: the same moment his soul stood before its judge.

His master was soon to follow him. While Hinnark was engaged with Caspar, Younker Hans knelt down before his fallen rival. In former days, overpowered by rage, he would have killed him outright; for Christian love for enemies did not dwell in his heart: but today he trembled at the thought that Kurt might be dead. He opened his helmet and observed with joy that, after all, the stroke might not be deadly.

When he had convinced himself that the fallen foe was still breathing, he gave him some wine from his flask, an act which greatly surprised his men. In fact, Younker Kurt did open his eyes once more and recognized his opponent, who had opened his visor likewise.

"Kurt, tell me honestly, what you have done with my Elsa, and I will attempt to forget the past and to save your life."

For a moment it seemed that the love of life was wrestling with his malice; but the latter soon got the better of him. With a sarcastic grin, giving his pale, blood-stained face a ghastly appearance, he answered his opponent:

"My life is forfeited anyway; it would be better for me to die by your sword than on the gallows. But one thing will sweeten death; my satisfied revenge. I know where Miss Elsa is; but before I would tell you, I would rather bite my tongue off, and alone you will never find her."

"Sir, come up! It may cost you your life; the enemies are beginning to fire again."

In his excitement Younker Hans scarcely heard the anguished cry of his squire. Once more he bent over the fallen man and said:

"Reconsider! the thumb-screws of the executioner might change your thoughts!"

"Go to hell!" yelled the wounded man, accompanying his profane words with a look of inextinguishable hate.

At that Younker Hans arose to his feet to climb the wall again, but at the same moment he fell, severely wounded. What Hinnark with a trembling heart had feared, really came to pass. As soon as their comrades had left the ramparts these became once more the target for the cannon of the Turks. The tall German knight, who had so recklessly exposed himself, offered a fine target; hard by his side a large ball struck and shattered a rock in the rampart. This hurtling mass broke the left leg and arm of Younker

Hans, at the same time crushing the head of his prostrated foe. An act of tragic justice, indeed, that the renegade's death should be brought about by the enemies of Christianity, whose ally he had become! With a cry of terror, Hinnark left his cannon and leaped to the aid of his fallen master. As no other person ventured to face the leaden hail, he had to lift him up unaided. It was a tremendous burden that he shouldered, but the strong smith was equal to it. Once on top, he found willing hands enough to help him. With the other wounded knights, Hans was taken to the hospital, where to Hinnark's unspeakable joy he soon regained consciousness. His first clear thought was of his opponent.

"Does he still live, and has he confessed?" he asked his faithful Hinnark.

"He has received his reward; the same ball which broke your arm and leg crushed his head."

"His reward!" the knight meditatively repeated. "After all, should there be such a thing as divine justice? But his secret the rascal has carried into death; his last word was a curse. But what became of his Caspar? He might give us the information?"

"At first he simulated death, then, when the Turks took to flight, he jumped quickly to his feet and would have gotten away if my ball had not torn his head off. He, too, has his reward."

"And he, too, has taken with him the secret with whose solution is bound up the happiness of my life. Where, then, is divine justice? Blind fate has been running amuck; that's all."

"My dear master," replied Hinnark, "when you are healthy and well once more; you will be able to recognize the dealings of divine providence. Just listen to the joyful message resounding from the street: the Turks are breaking camp. Our Lord God has not entirely forsaken his hard-beset Church, and we have been privileged to take a hand in the achievement of the most glorious victory."

It was really true; incredible as it seemed:

the army of Solyman the Magnificent, which had never been conquered, was totally beaten by a handful of Germans. On October 15th he started the retreat. To deceive the world and to cheer up his discouraged army he distributed rich rewards among his leaders and the Janizaries. This had the desired effect upon his men, who showered congratulations upon him as if he had been the conqueror. But neither the stale phrases of Turkish eloquence nor the inhuman atrocities which the retreating army committed, could hide from the world his discomfiture. The ruler of the Turks had also perceived that his attack had made the Christians more peaceable toward each other, which resulted in concert of action against himself. True, the commander-in-chief, Count Palatine Frederick, had come too late to get into the besieged city, but the feeling in Germany at the approach of the common danger had changed. Against the old time sermons in favor of crusades, Luther had raised his voice, and not without reason; they were altogether political moves of the papacy in its own behalf. But, at the approach of Solyman in 1529, he raised his voice mightily for the deliverance of the country. He overlooked all the persecutions and mischief to which the emperor had subjected the Lutherans, and declared it the absolute duty of all Christians to follow the call of their ruler. The banner of the emperor, to quote Luther's racy language, was not "a rag of silk, but the background for God's command, protection for the godly, and punishment for the wicked."

Luther's mighty call against the Turkish robbers and murderers did not remain unheeded. The Protestant estates did not exclude themselves from the expedition, though they had refused succor at the outset. John Frederick of Saxony was to head the troops which his father had been commissioned to raise. Thereupon, with customary tardiness, of course, the imperial army was mobilized. But Solyman had just found out the power of the hitherto

despised Germans, and did not wait for the appearance of the army. Germany was saved for all time from the Turkish horde. Only once more in later times did they appear at the gates of Vienna, then to disappear forever.

The wounds of Younker Hans were exceedingly severe. Food, air, and treatment were not very satisfactory in the overfilled hospital. Especially the broken leg, which healed very slowly, constituted a tedious disorder. This was aggavated by the knight's despondent frame of mind. The remarkable meeting with his rival, and the latter's end had given his unbelief a jolt, but by no means overcome it. With the self-righteous disposition peculiar to the natural man he thought only of the offence of others against himself, never of his own offence against God and men. Because everything did not go according to his wishes, he was quarreling with Fate, which he had made his substitute for Almighty God. Strange to say, he had gotten away from the thought of suicide, which formerly vexed him with great frequency. Every once in a while there came into his mind the word of Count Palatine Philip; he was surprised at himself for fearing the snapping of the lonely thread by which his life was hanging, while formerly he was quite ready to throw away his youthful life of his own accord.

In a large measure this change of mind was brought about by a booklet which Hinnark brought him one day. The latter had noticed how a severely wounded soldier, at times, when no priest happened to be near, would draw a little book from under his pillow, and diligently read in it; whereupon he would fold his head and rest peaceably, as if the reading had brought him greatest comfort. "He certainly has a letter of Dr. Luther," thought Hinnark, and made himself acquainted with the comrade, who had been a stranger to him hitherto. How the eyes of the sick man shone when he recognized in Hinnark a

brother in the faith and a man of Evangelical principles!

"What kind of booklet is that under your pillow?" Hinnark asked him. "It always seems to bring you comfort and joy."

His eyes shining, the wounded soldier drew forth the book and said:

"It is my greatest treasure; I would not give it up for all the money of the world, poor as I am. But I must guard it against the Romish priests. If they discovered it, I should lose it; for it is the Small Catechism of that great man of God, Dr. Martin Luther."

With a trembling hand Hinnark reached for the booklet, saying:

"For years I have been desirous of getting something written by that man of God into my hands. Even my father at home urged such effort upon me as my duty. May I read the little book?"

"Certainly; but I do not want it to get out of my sight." The two comrades, who now recognized each other as brethren in the Lord, had spoken softly to each other, lest some fanatical priest might hear and betray them. Hinnark opened the book, and was soon so absorbed in it that he neither heard nor saw what was going on around him. What a new world was opened before him in this Layman's Bible—the most precious book next to the Word of God! How dismayed he was when he read the explanations of the Commandments, so precious and clear. How he rejoiced when he found his faith nourished and strengthened by one wonderful sentence — the explanation of the Second Article. He had to read that sentence three times, until he almost knew it by heart. A new, inexpressibly beautiful supplication The Lord's Prayer appeared to him when he had read Luther's explanation. What a comfort his Baptism was to him; how he longed for the Holy Supper in both forms when Luther's explanation had given him light! It was growing dark when he had come to the

Evening Prayer. This also he had to read again and again, until he knew it by heart. He sat there with his hands folded; his eyes closed while his lips softly repeated this precious prayer, which, from now on, he was to use every evening of his life for his devotions.

The wounded comrade observed with great joy what a deep impression his booklet was making upon Hinnark; it had had the same effect on him when he read it for the first time. He, likewise, folded his hands and committed himself, body and soul, into the hands of his Heavenly Father, as he had learned to do from Luther's Catechism. Then he heard Younker Hans calling for his Hinnark, which the latter, in his ecstasy, entirely overheard. Gently, therefore, he took his hand and said to him:

"Say, that does refresh the poor soul: but your master is calling you; tomorrow you may continue reading."

Hinnark started as from a deep dream, and it took him several moments to collect his thoughts. Then he whispered to his comrade:

"A thousand, thousand thanks. Tomorrow I shall buy a little book to copy this precious volume."

With that he went over to his master.

"Hinnark, what did you find so interesting to read," smilingly asked his master, "that you forgot everything around you? Was it a blood-curdling romance of chivalry, or some robber story?"

"O master, you, too, must read it; it is a little book by Dr. Martin Luther—his Small Catechism, in which he presents the Way of Salvation so clearly. Tomorrow I am going to get paper to copy the little book. Just hear how he explains the Second Article of our Christian Faith."

Whose heart is full, his mouth flows over. Our good Hinnark did not become aware of the indulgent smile of his master at his zeal: he folded his hands and repeated Dr. Luther's explanation of the Second Article as if it had been a prayer. Those precious

words had so impressed his grace-hungry soul that he could repeat them almost without stumbling. This will forever remain the most precious feature of this smallest and yet greatest Lutheran Confession: the Small Catechism can be prayed. The smile quickly vanished from the master's face; when Hinnark had ended, he said with unusual emotion:

"I, also, will read the book."

This made the pious Hinnark happy, and when he closed his evening prayer for the first time with Luther's "I thank Thee, my heavenly Father," etc., he wove into it a hearty petition that Luther's book might bring peace of soul to his poor master.

Day by day Hinnark sat in a quiet corner of the hospital and copied the Catechism, which at that time could not yet be bought in Vienna. Moreover, the funds of his master had become so low again that there was no thought of buying books. Writing was a difficult task for our Hinnark, who could still wield the hammer and the sword far better than the pen. Notwithstanding he thought again and again: "How my father will be pleased when he sees what good fruit his instruction in writing has borne. How he will devour Luther's book! That is bound to relieve him of all doubt. With this he whispered to himself: "Purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and the power of the devil: not with gold nor silver, but with His holy, precious blood, and with His innocent suffering and death, that I might be His own."

One day he brought his little book to his master and said, his face radiating joy:

"My father made it a duty for me to bring him one of Dr. Luther's writings; how he will rejoice when, sometime, I can bring him this precious treasure." His master replied:

"Then your father shall not wait long. As in Bavaria, so, no doubt, I shall be compelled to lie here the whole winter; for I do not wish to get up too soon a second time. This time there is no need for haste;

for at home I should not find my Elsa anyway, and Younker Kurt is no more. What he at first shouted to me, that she is in his harem, is certainly only malice on his part. His last word merely confirms our suspicion that she has gone somewhere into a convent. Although it is late in the season, snowflakes filling the air, you may ride homeward tomorrow, if you desire. If your Dortie is still living and enjoys freedom, word will have been received from her by this time. In the spring I hope to ride to Augsburg, where I have heard a great Diet is to meet. There one would most likely hear something. But before the beginning of the Diet, you need not look for me there. If you cannot return yourself, write to the inn where we stayed. I release you from your duty; for in my poverty I cannot expect you any longer to follow me on my aimless journeys."

"Master, I pity you if you think that I could forsake you as long as you are in misfortune." replied Hinnark. "I am willing to ride, for I feel that good news awaits me at home. Possibly it is only the joy over Luther's little book that makes the whole world look so rosy to me. But I really believe that I shall not ride in vain this time. You can get along here without me. Spare yourself, and be of good courage! And do not forget to go to the great man of God, Luther: he can certainly free you from your doubts. Should your betrothed really be in the convent, he will know best how to set her free, especially from her convent vows, which might bind her conscience, however gladly she would be willing to follow you."

This proved convincing even for Younker Hans, and he promised what he had already promised before, to see Luther. Hinnark accordingly left Vienna the next day; his purse was almost empty, but his heart full of hope.

CHAPTER XII.

The Journeyman.

AS a veteran who had fought at Vienna, Hinnark was accorded everywhere a hearty welcome. In song and story the glorious victory of the Christians was celebrated. When he told about the dreadful assault, the grim Janizaries, the heaps of corpses before the walls, he would find an enthusiastic audience in every tavern and, often, free entertainment. In this way he passed safely through Bohemia into Saxony. This time he did not wish to miss Wittenberg, especially since it was on his way. How his heart yearned to know the man who had freed him from the fear of purgatory and hell—the man who wrote the precious Catechism. In a village in Electoral Saxony he had, for the first time in his life, opportunity to attend a full Evangelical service. How his heart throbbed at the singing of the whole congregation — something he had never heard before, especially when Luther's "A Tower of Strength" was sung, a hymn just then introduced. On the same afternoon he learned this mighty hymn by heart, wherein his landlord aided him, who was happy to have such a willing pupil. He also went to the minister, whose sermon had deeply impressed him; he could not hear enough from his lips about Luther and his work.

Soon after he rode into Wittenberg, the little town on the Elbe, which had become a white, shining mountain for the whole world. Too modest to go to Luther himself, and aware of the burden of work resting on that man's shoulders, he prepared for a message from him on Sunday, and announced his name to the minister for Holy Communion, for which he had an intense longing.

In his whole life he could never forget that Sunday. When Luther entered the pulpit, Hinnark, who

sat modestly in the last corner, thought that he had pictured the man just so. Although hitherto he had seen only a few poor caricatures of Luther, he thought that he had always known this face with its flashing eyes, with manly beauty and vigor stamped all over it.

The four years in which his Katy had cared for Luther had been good for him, body and soul: His body, formerly wasted through excessive castigation in the cloister and the fearful overwork which followed his monastic period, had become strong and supple. His bed no longer lay unmade for weeks, his meals no longer were forgotten; for the mistress of the house was a model German housewife. Of course, he never entirely lost the severe bladder trouble which he had contracted upon the cold pavement of the cloister, where he was wont to wrestle, prostrate, for his salvation.

His head thrown back, as if ready for battle, with a resonant, clear voice, Luther preached about the One Thing Needful—the star in his own night, the strength in his own weakness. As he described the sinner dismayed to death under the Law, Hinnark was touched to the marrow—that had been his very experience. But when Luther drew a picture of the Savior, every touch true to life, and every trait clear as sunlight, tears flowed over the tanned cheeks of the strong soldier. "Whence does this man know my state of mind?" he asked himself again and again. "Should my landlord have told him about me? Oh, if my master would come to this man of God—and he will do so since he has promised it to his betrothed and myself—he, also, will receive help."

When, after the sermon, the last hymn was sung, he was still so absorbed in what he had heard that he was unconscious of all around him. Not until the celebration of the Lord's Supper began and the introductory part of the beautiful German Communion liturgy was intoned, did he look up; with timid steps he joined the other communicants and approached the altar.

When, for the first time in his life, the consecrated cup touched his lips, a holy awe took possession of his soul. It was the most blessed moment of his life, as he would often later declare. After going out, he remained standing on the street to obtain a better look at the man of God. And his wish was fulfilled. When, at the side of the parish minister, Luther walked in his direction, the warrior stepped modestly aside. The quick eye of Luther having observed the devout attention of the soldier in the church corner, he responded to the respectful greeting of the warrior by accosting him with the question:

"You seem to be a stranger here; do you, perhaps, come from the Turkish war?"

"Straight from Vienna, which I helped to defend, reverend Doctor."

"Then you will have to dine with me and tell myself and my family about the victory of the Christians. My Katy will have a plate of soup left for an honest soldier."

The good Hinnark scarcely knew what had happened to him; he could scarcely speak for embarrassment. Could it be possible that this friend of men was the same whom pope and emperor feared? What was he to do and say in the house of this great man? But Luther's cordiality was such that the poor soldier soon lost all fear. This was especially the case in Luther's home, the large old monastery in which Luther had formerly lived as a monk, but which the elector had given to him —a present that had its disadvantages, necessary repairs becoming so frequent as to occasion many a sigh from Luther. His wife Katy, although descended from the nobility, was a simple German housewife. She did not look sour when the doctor brought a guest along. She was used to that. Although Luther's income was small, he always entertained guests, especially poor students, whom he boarded free of charge. Without the management and economy of his wife, however, the liberal man would often have gotten into dire distress.

In consequence Hinnark was received in a most friendly manner; moreover, when he was launched upon his narrative, his timidity completely vanished. Of course, he would rather have heard Luther speak all the time. Finally he took heart and told about his master and his betrothed, of whom every trace had been lost.

"No doubt, you are right; in her despair she has entered the convent," said Luther. "And if you should finally find her, I fear that the young woman will still have conscientious scruples. Therefore I will give you a booklet, which once helped my wife to shake off the shackles of the convent. However, I scarcely know whether there is still a copy to be found among my books."

With these words he was about to arise and look for the book. But Mistress Katy said:

"I still have the same little book which at that time was brought to us poor nuns in the convent, with the result that we were led to freedom from the oppression of the Antichrist."

Presently she brought from her room that powerful book of Luther's, "On the Liberty of a Christian."

Handing it to Hinnark, she said:

"Take it to your young mistress: nothing would please me more than that another poor soul should be set free through it."

The youngest child of Mrs. Katy was weeping in the cradle, which induced her to leave the table and go to the child. The eyes of her happy husband followed her, so that Hinnark felt the truth of those words written later by a great historian: "How much the world would have lost had this man not become a husband and a father." The embittered enemies of Luther's were welcome to fancy in their superstition that out of this marriage of the monk and the nun and the Antichrist would be born: Luther said that he would not surrender his Katy for all the treasures of Venice. The Evangelical parsonage, founded by Luther and his Katy, has become an

incalculable blessing to the world, and has brought forth more great men than any other home, of whatever rank.

Hinnark's heart was full to overflowing when he took leave of Luther and his home. Upon being asked whether he was going to the Diet at Augsburg, Luther smilingly answered:

"They refuse to take me along, especially since I am outlawed by both Papacy and the Empire. But my gracious elector will take me as far as Coburg, where you will be able to find me during the Diet."

On the next day Hinnark resumed his journey with a joyful heart. The little book that Luther had given him he read the same Sunday evening. The great truth of Christian liberty filled him with such enthusiasm that he kept saying:

"Our young mistress only needs to read that but once to be free to obey the prompting of her heart."

"The weather was milder than it had been for some days; the deep snow began to melt; then there came a dangerous sleet. Hinnark's horse slipped so frequently that he said to himself:

"In the next village I must go to the blacksmith's; true, I have no more money, but he will let me use his hammer, tongs and forge for a while without pay; the work I can do myself."

He had to stay longer at the blacksmith's than he expected. Hard by the village the horse stumbled so severely that it wrenched one of its forelegs. Only with great difficulty did he get it as far as the smithy.

When the old smith had examined the trouble, he said:

"Several weeks will be required beyond a doubt until the leg is well again. Which way do you travel?"

"To the neighborhood of Luneburg."

"Then you will have to take quarters in the inn across the way until your horse is restored."

Hinnark in his embarrassment scratched his head and said:

"Like most mercenaries I am lacking funds; we did not get rich on the Turks, especially since I had to stay with my mortally wounded master in Vienna: this prevented me from joining in the pursuit, which has, in any event, ill paid those who set out upon it. Master, could you not give me work? I am a trained blacksmith, and even in the army I often stood at the anvil."

"That offer comes quite convenient. Last fall I discharged my apprentice; now the sleet has brought me more work than I can do; you may take hold at once. It is something unusual, however, that a mercenary offers to go to work; most of your comrades are as shy of work as the devil is of holy water, being more eager to beg and to steal."

Hinnark made no answer: he was not offended at the unfavorable remark about the warrior caste, knowing quite well that the master was speaking the whole truth. Having taken off his helmet and coat of mail, he, with the help of the master, bandaged the leg of his horse, and then took his position at the anvil as though he had done nothing else all his life. He was so skillful at shoeing horses that the master said in surprise:

"If you continue to work like that, you may arrange to stay with me all next summer. I will pay you decent wages, more than you can honorably earn as a mercenary."

Hinnark rejoiced in the praise, but felt constrained to answer:

"I must get home as soon as possible, and then once more back into the world to my master. But I have enough of this war business; as soon as I can, I will be a blacksmith once more."

Then he inquired of which faith the people were in that section. When he had learned that everybody

was Evangelical, he told his entire history. With joy he was received into the godly family, with which he spent several happy weeks. His horse, however, would not improve, although a veterinarian had been called in. The statement of this expert was that the horse would hardly carry a rider again before Easter. What now? Hinnark could not wait so long; might his Dortie not be waiting for him at home with an important message?

"Master," he said one morning, "if you are willing to keep my poor horse for the little that I have earned here, I will continue traveling in the capacity of a blacksmith journeyman. Probably, when I return in the spring, I can do something more for you."

"I will willingly do that; but do not forget my offer. If you do not find anything better, come back to me as assistant; I shall always have use for such a godly and efficient man."

Having left his horse and martial accoutrements with the master, Hinnark, with a thin knapsack on his shoulder, set out upon his journey. It was a difficult undertaking; for inclement weather had again set in, nor was he received as well everywhere as he had been in the smithy, especially since he was now entirely without money. The distance of ten miles between Celle and Hermannsburg it took him a whole day to cover. Tired to death, he arrived at evening in the village upon the heath. Until now he had always stayed at the village smithy; but on this particular evening he was struck with the beautiful old church, which, already in 972, had been consecrated by the Saxon Duke Hermann Billung. When he saw the parsonage in the neighborhood of the church, the thought came to him, for once, to apply for hospitality there. To his joyful surprise he was received in the most friendly manner by the minister, Christopher Gruenhagen, the young scion of a prominent patrician family. The minister was a merciful man: having regaled the poor young fellow, frozen

stiff and half starved, with food, he assigned him a place by the hearth. After expressing hearty thanks to his friendly host Hinnark folded his hands, and, upon making the sign of the cross, he prayed Luther's "Benedicite," which he by that time knew by heart. The pastor wondered at the pious journeyman, who prayed so long and devoutly before eating. But his astonishment grew when the young man, after eating, again folded his hands and thanked God with every evidence of devotion. But most of all the pastor was surprised when the traveling journeyman drew a written book from his pocket, and began to read diligently. A journeyman who could read, especially script, certainly was a great rarity for that time. This, too, is one of the blessings of the Reformation, that nearly everybody has some schooling, especially in German lands. Luther is the father of the public school. In Roman Catholic countries, where the presence of many Protestants does not demand special effort, ignorance is even today quite general. With considerable curiosity Pastor Gruenhagen stepped up to the remarkable journeyman and asked him:

"What are you reading?"

Instead of an answer Hinnark handed him the book.

The preacher read and read, and the more he read, the more greedily he devoured the book. Since the Peasant War he had great dread of all innovations; in his quiet heath village he had heard little about Luther's work, nor had he seen hitherto any of his writings. But when he read the Small Catechism, the thought seemed to startle his soul like a flash of lightning: "That is the truth."

He then asked Hinnark whence he had come. The answer was given:

"I was in Vienna with my master, Younker von Hasselbach. He is lying sick and sends me home. A short time ago my horse was injured: therefore I am traveling home to Uhlenhorst afoot."

"Did you in Vienna become acquainted with

Klaas Schuette? He started from here with the ducal archers against the Turks, and recently returned home, without his little boy, however, whom the Turks captured?"

"No, the men of the duke arrived too late to get into the city, and in the pursuit of the enemy, which ended so badly, I could not take part on account of my master; but may I not meet the comrade here?"

"You shall see him tomorrow. But now tell me: how did you come in possession of this glorious book? Were you, perhaps, yourself in Wittenberg?"

"On my homeward journey I visited Wittenberg and heard the man of God preach, whose Gospel had given me peace a long time before. When I greeted him on the street, he even took me into his house and to his table. O dear pastor, what a man he is! This Catechism I copied in Vienna; a Lutheran comrade loaned me his book for the purpose."

Now the excitement and joy of the young preacher was even greater.

Hinnark had to tell him all about Luther and his work, and the minister could not hear enough. Finally he noticed how tired the journeyman was; giving him his hand, he said:

"I could listen to you all night: but you must rest now. Tomorrow you cannot go on, since you must stay here until I, also, have copied the Catechism."

On the next morning, while the minister sat at his writing-table, copying the small Catechism and, meanwhile, passing through the power of the Holy Spirit under the influence of the Gospel of free grace in Christ, Hinnark sat with Klaas, his comrade who, from the position of archer (Schuetze) which he had held in the army, had been named Schuette. How much they had to tell each other about the Turkish war! Though he had participated in it for but a few days, Klaas had lost his Peter. Having been taken along by his father, the lad, a motherless orphan, owing to the rapid pursuit of the Turks, had fallen

into their hands. Louis Harms, following an old chronicle, narrates how this pious youth, who was well versed in the Lutheran Catechism, while in the power of the infidels, steadfastly confessed his Savior, and then, after many years, in a wonderful manner found his way back to his father.

Unfortunately Hinnark could not tell the disconsolate father anything about his Peter. All the more, however, he rejoiced to find in him a brother in the Lutheran faith. At the outset of the Turkish war, Klaas had become a Lutheran through the influence of comrades, had learned the Catechism, and had taught it to Peter. Unlike Hinnark, he could not write; and, on account of his poverty, he had not been able to buy the book. How glad he was to be informed that his pastor was deeply interested in the precious little volume.

"Until now I did not venture to confess my Evangelical faith publicly. At many places the preachers are very much opposed to it. But from conversation with neighbors I know: If our pastor, whom we all love, embraces the Evangelical faith, the whole congregation will follow him."

So said Klaas Schuette, and he proved to be right. Pastor Gruenhagen sent for other Lutheran books. As soon as he had recognized the Evangelical truth, he also preached it. A wonderful commotion in the old heath village was the result. Almost the entire congregation sided with their shepherd. While Pastor Gruenhagen acted upon the principle: "I believe, therefore I speak," he, as well as his members, had to experience likewise the truth of the words immediately following: "I was greatly afflicted."

The prefect of that section, Andreas Ludwig von Feuschuetz, a zealous defender of the papal church and, at the same time, a resolute, determined man, forbade the pastor to preach the Lutheran heresy. When he was not obeyed he had the church locked up by his soldiers.

The stalwart farmers wanted to overcome force with force, but Pastor Gruenhagen would not permit this. He endeavored to conduct services in his own house and those of the farmers, but everywhere the prefect disturbed the services through his mercenaries. Finally the congregation went to a dell in the forest, appropriately named Tieftal, where services were conducted beneath the trees. But the prefect, having spied out even this place, sent to the commander of the castle in Celle for two hundred soldiers.

Duke Ernest had gone to the Augsburg Diet; otherwise this never would have happened. The prefect had represented the conduct of the congregation as a peasant insurrection—a potent argument, since fear of another peasant war was still in the air. Pastor Gruenhagen, with hundreds of the faithful, was imprisoned in Celle till the duke returned and set them free. Then the hour of grace came also for the prefect: the former papal zealot became henceforth a devout advocate of the saving Gospel.

The part of Gruenhagen's story here anticipated was learned by Hinnark on the occasion of his subsequent trip to this village. Now, strengthened in body and in mind, he started for home, where he soon arrived safe and sound, much to the joy of his friends.

"Is Dortie likely to be at home? Or will there at least be some information concerning her?" These thoughts had filled his breast during the long journey from Vienna, and in the last few days the suspense had become almost painful. His first question, therefore, after the passionate greetings were over, was: "Has Dortie come home?"

The sad look of his parents was sufficient response. Throughout the past year they had heard nothing of the girl, either: she and her mistress seemed to have been swallowed up by the earth. The disappointment was almost too much for Hinnark: he had counted on good news with too great assurance. Sinking down upon a chair, he supported his head on

the table, and wept. It was the first time that the strong man had so broken down. The mother wept with him, and even the father wiped a tear from his eyes. But grandmother spoke from her corner at the stove, which she seldom left any more:

"Children, the old God still lives. Did he not show his almighty hand plainly enough when He summoned the godless Kurt and his Caspar before His judgment? Most likely the Romanists, by force and trickery, have prevented the young woman from writing or coming home? If Dortie still lives, she will sometime come home — that is my firm conviction. But, Hinnark, have you nothing to report of Dr. Luther and the blessed Gospel? Your father is still waiting for it with greater anxiety."

These words relieved the tension. Hinnark raised his head, wiped the tears from his eyes, and said:

"This time you do not ask in vain. Already in Vienna I became acquainted with Luther's Catechism, which I copied. In Wittenberg, however, I heard Dr. Luther preach, and even ate at his table."

Drawing his little book from his pocket, he said, as he handed it to his father:

"It is a glorious book; I already know it by heart. In Hermannsburg Pastor Gruenhagen has copied it and been converted through it to the Evangelical faith."

Thus began the first catechetical instruction in the house of the tailor, and no impatience cut it short. Hinnark had arrived toward evening, just when the mother was about to serve the evening soup. It had already grown quite cold before its presence on the table was even remembered. Scarcely was the table cleared when the Catechism was once more taken up. Even the news about the Turkish War had to take second place — so hungry and thirsty was the father for the true righteousness, which he finally found through this book. Especially at the Second Article did he tarry, fairly absorbing the stately, impressive words: "Not with gold or silver, but with his holy

precious blood, and with his innocent suffering and death."

"I, also, gave my silver to purchase indulgence." he said as if to himself, "but it never brought me real comfort. How can it be possible that the good Lord is so gracious? I am merely to believe it, as grandmother has done long ago. It seems too much to believe that my great sins are taken away at one stroke. But here it stands, clear and plain, in the explanation of the Third Article: 'In which Christian Church he daily and richly forgives all sins to me and all believers.'"

Later, also this word was a real comfort to him: "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith."

"Yes," he said, "I have experienced that all these years. I wished to grasp with my reason how God can make it so easy for us poor sinners, and for this reason I never rose to a free and joyful faith like grandmother. Thanks and praise to God that, at last, he has opened my eyes."

When, finally, Hinnark began to narrate his experience, which was of especial interest to the younger members of this truly godly family, the father put on his horn spectacles and occupied himself with the Catechism. It was an even greater refreshment for him than it had been several months ago for Hinnark, who, at heart, had placed all his trust in the Savior long before he saw the book. When, about midnight, the others finally sought their couch, the father was still awake, poring over his Catechism. He probably would have read, meditated, and prayed all night, if his dim lamp had not eventually gone out. He sank upon his knees before his working table and poured out his overfull heart to God, who had finally led him to a living, saving faith. When he did go to bed, his excited thoughts did not permit him to

sleep for a long time. Nor did the devil at once take his departure: he marshalled the old doubts to a last assault. Again the old tailor asked himself whether the Savior had really and truly made atonement for all his sins, whether faith was really enough for the forgiveness of all sins. As answer he repeated the words: "Not with gold or silver," etc., and then he continued: "That I might be his own, and live under him in his kingdom and serve him."

"My dearest Savior, how willingly will I live unto Thee and serve Thee, since Thou hast redeemed me from all sin, from death and from the power of the devil."

When the devil wanted to come once more with doubts, old father Smid said aloud: "This is most certainly true."

His wife awoke and asked what he was doing.

"I have come to faith in my Lord and Savior, and no devil shall rob me of it; for it is most certainly true that I have been saved through Christ by grace alone."

The master had said this in so loud a voice that even his mother in the next room understood the words. The godly woman, hearing that evidence of the son's conversion, folded her withered hands and thanked God.

On the following evening the tailor-shop was almost too small to hold all the people who had come to greet Hinnark and to hear about the war and the Reformation. With astonishment they heard the account of his wonderful experience in Vienna. All knew the younger von Uhlenhorst and his squire Caspar. With horror these simple Christian people heard of the betrayal of God, faith, and country by these men, and of their dreadful end. But even more desirous they were to hear about Wittenberg, about Dr. Luther, and his Evangelical doctrine. They had heard that, here and there in the Luneburg country, Evangelical preachers had arisen, while their own pastor was still thundering against the heretic brood.

Then Hinnark had to read his Catechism to them and to explain it as best he could. It was a new world for them all. They breathed freely, as if their breasts had been relieved of a mountain. Timidly at first, then more boldly, one after the other expressed his agreement with the Catechism. Father Smid, who by all was recognized as a sincere Christian and sensible man, made a clear confession of his new faith, which had secured for him what no papal indulgence had been able to do—the forgiveness of sin. Profound was the impression made by the voice of that old venerable man.

But Hinnark had something quite extraordinary for his neighbors and friends. With a clear voice he at once began to sing: "A tower of strength our God is still." Some timid souls had pointed to the danger they incurred through this meeting, should the priest and the noble family in the castle get wind of it. Hinnark, by way of reply, all at once began the hymn "A Tower of Strength." His parents, brothers, and sisters, who had been practicing it all day, joined in with power, and the powerful battle-hymn of Luther did not fail to produce its appropriate effect. All listened eagerly: then Hinnark had to repeat it line for line, and soon the whole company could sing the first stanza.

On the outside, however, a man stood at the window and looked in with malignant eyes. For a long time he stood there with clenched fists, discussing with himself whether he should enter at once and fall upon them like lightning or wait with his reproof until the next Sunday. He had just resolved to enter the house, when the hymn began. Eager to hear it, he went close to the window and was thus enabled to understand the words, made audible by the vigorous singing. As if they were blows from a sledge-hammer, these words fell upon his conscience:

"Deep guile and great might
Are his dread arms in fight,
On earth is not his equal."

Had he himself not already employed might and guile to serve his church? Had he not already told an open lie, yes, really perjured himself? Did he not know enough about the history of his church to be compelled to acknowledge that Luther's words were adapted to it? Was she and he, with all their might and guile, with all their zeal, in the service of the old bitter foe, of whom these simple people were singing? Would God not really be a mighty fortress for the Evangelicals, delivering them from all their troubles?

Priest Anselm stepped back from the window and went home. The hour of his visitation had come. But he was kicking against the prick which the battle-hymn of Luther had driven into his conscience. Should he, the most renowned defender of the faith in his order, who had secured for it such rich inheritance, now humble himself before these heretics, before this brazen smith Hinnark, who had once before resisted him? Should he finally even become a Lutheran preacher, dependent upon his parish for a niggardly support, and subject to the dictation of these ignorant peasants in regard to what he was to preach? Was this to happen to him, who had the best prospect of becoming the abbott of his convent? Never!

The severe inner battle prevented at least his interference at the time being. He went home and prepared a sermon full of violent attacks upon Luther and the worst threats against his followers. Early the next morning he went to the castle to warn against possible measures by Hinnark, since it was possible that he had learned meanwhile the abode of the missing girl. He was reassured by the information received later that Hinnark had found out nothing, but had returned for information to the village.

"My letters have evidently produced their intended effect," Father Anselm said with a grin. In Bavaria they do not make much fuss over these heretics. If it was only so here! But Duke Ernest is flirting with the Lutherans and allows the evil seed to

spring up unhindered wherever it is scattered by those renegade priests. Well, all the more it is my duty to contend against it. Yesterday I was almost infected. That shall never happen again. I believe that they put also Dortie Peters behind bars as soon as her letters were intercepted. Younker Hans can hunt a long time until he finds his little dove in the Bavarian highland. And should he ever find her, it might cost his neck and that of his squire; for those faithful Bavarians do not fool long. The end of the old gentleman here is evidently approaching. Then it will be a small matter for me to put the mistress into the convent and at one stroke to take possession of the whole estate in behalf of our order."

Highly pleased with himself, he rubbed his hands, while he continued to soliloquize: "With this rich gift in my hands, I cannot fail to secure the place of the old abbott upon his death. With this rich estate our cloister will take on new life and be able to resist any attack of the brood of heretics."

Hinnark knew very well what would happen on the next Sunday; notwithstanding he went to church with his people. His father had been in the habit of going to church in recent years, even though, since becoming aware of the priest's duplicity, he no longer attended confession. Both, father and son, quietly listened to the fierce words of the fanatic. Hinnark naturally was much depressed. If his poor Dortie had gotten into the hands of such a zealot, the very worst could be expected.

To get rid of these depressing thoughts, he went to his old master on the next day and asked for work. Spring having come almost of a sudden, there was plenty to do in the smithy. Thus the Saturday before Easter came, a lovely spring day. Hinnark had just completed his work and was about to go home to supper, when he observed several heavily laden freight wagons, which were approaching the village from the south.

"They certainly are in a hurry this year," he

thought. "But the unusually warm weather has coaxed them out. This is an opportunity to hear something new from the realm; so I will wait till they come up."

Taking his seat on the bench before the house and looking toward the coming wagons, he sighed:

"If they might only bring me some news of my Dortie!"

Presently he was able to make out the form of the driver with his whip. But what form is that by the driver's side? There is no hat nor cap. The head-covering is not the helmet of a soldier, but seemingly a cloth. Why, is that not the form of a woman? Great God, could this possibly———?

As if struck by lightning, Hinnark, at that thought jumped to his feet and shaded his eyes with his hand in order to see better. Then he saw the form in the wagon also arising and putting a hand up to her eyes. Now he was quite certain that it was a woman; then he saw her drawing the dark cloth from her head, as if it suddenly had grown too warm for her; now she made signs with her right hand. Yes, he even thought that he heard a soft shout of joy.

"That is none other than Dortie!" he shouted, at the same time leaping toward the wagon. His mother saw him running past the house; divining the joyful event, she made for the door. The wagon stopped; in greatest hurry the girl climbed down and hastened toward the approaching man. In a few moments the long separated lovers lay in each other's arms.

It really was Dortie Peters. Winter had scarcely fled from the mountains when, one day, a band of mercenaries came into the village. Their sutler was none other than mother Marianne. With a shout of joy Dortie fell upon her neck and told her of her distress.

"I can help you," answered mother Marianne: "You will go with us to Augsburg, whence merchants often travel to Brunswick with large wagons. I am acquainted there and shall look out for you."

"Thank God; but be sure not to tell this in town: otherwise I might be held by force."

"But why? How did you get into this forlorn village? But for your lover having released you, I should have thought you to be still in Rome."

"Just be still, I will tell you all! My mistress is languishing in the convent yonder. Her villainous cousin pounced upon her lover in Pavia and almost killed him. To escape her cousin, my poor lady went into the convent, thinking her lover dead. By accident, however, I learned that he spent the whole winter in the neighboring town, and is now searching for his beloved. I have already written three letters, but the mother superior intercepts them all. Now I will go with you."

Mother Marianne, who likewise had become a Lutheran in secret, threw up her hands in astonishment. Immediately, however, she planned how to get the girl, for whom she had conceived a motherly affection, away in safety. Dortie, having taken leave of her young mistress by means of her ladder, before break of day, crawled into the large, covered wagon of Marianne. As soon as the landlord observed her absence he hastened to the mother superior; but this time even that astute person could give no advice. With those wild soldiers nothing was to be done. Therefore she wrote a long letter to Father Anselm, which arrived in Uhlenhorst about the same time as Dortie. As Mother Marianne had foreseen, Dortie had found an old merchant in Augsburg, who himself accompanied a number of his freight-wagons to Luneburg. He showed himself quite willing to take her along, especially since he, also, was Evangelical, not disinclined to play a trick upon Papists. By cooking, washing, and sewing for the men, Dortie had paid for her journey, and now she lay happy in the arms of her lover.

"Now it will not be long till Younker Hans shall enter Uhlenhorst by the side of the young lady of the

castle and put one over the Roman priests," predicted one of the peasants.

The shrewd fellow had gauged the weather correctly; however, it was to take a long time and many a conflict yet ere the facts should prove the correctness of the prediction.

Dortie's experiences were soon told. The next great question now was how to get the news to the old gentleman in the castle in the best way. They were discussing back and forth, when old Peter Lange entered. The news of Dortie's return had already reached the castle. Upon the reception of the news Madame von Uhlenhorst had shown such dismay that Father Anselm was sent for immediately. Of course, he had already heard the great news, and was deliberating how best to forestall the threatening evil. Since he had received that very day the letter of the abbess in which he was informed of Dortie's disappearance, her arrival did not surprise him so very much. There was no purpose in denying any longer the seclusion of Miss Elsa in the Bavarian cloister; but he would take care that everything should pass off according to program. He had, moreover, already heard by that time that Younker Hans was in Vienna. After quieting the parents, he meant at once to write another letter to the convent where the daughter was passing her days, so that they might exercise double caution in watching her.

On his arrival in the castle, however, a very unpleasant surprise awaited him. After repeating the lie that he had known nothing at all of the present abode of the daughter, he added with unction:

"Nevertheless rejoice that the Lord has baffled the counsels of the wicked and permitted our young lady to enter a convent in the face of opposition. In Bavaria that brazen Younker Hans shall not disturb the peace of the convent so readily as he did at the sack of Rome, where disorder ran riot. Neither will our pious young lady break her oath, even though the knight should find a way to her."

The mistress was reassured, and Herr von Uhlenhorst had been so quiet and preoccupied all this time that neither the priest nor the woman looked for opposition on his part.

However, all at once he voiced his objections in a manner as emphatic as free from bluster. Peter Lange, according to Hinnark's advice, had in the last few years not only taken good care of the old gentleman, but had also repeatedly cheered him by expressing the hope of his daughter's return. The duty to live for the sake of his Elsa, whom he called the apple of his eye, coupled with his renunciation of the cup, had given him a new lease on life. With quiet determination he now raised his head and said: "Peter, go down to Hinnark and Dortie, and tell them that they are to come to the castle tomorrow afternoon and report everything to me."

The priest staggered back from surprise, while the woman exclaimed:

"What, are we to have that brazen fellow here again, and accompanied by his paramour at that? Who knows where she has been gadding about? Peter, do not venture to carry out this commission; your master at times does not quite realize the import of his directions."

The old gentleman remained very quiet for a few moments, and then said:

"This time he does, nevertheless. Go at once!"

Peter, who had already feared that the woman and the priest might again get the better of the old man, turned quickly around and hastened into the village. Neither did he pay any attention to the words the woman shouted after him. When he had gone out, Herr von Uhlenhorst said with a dignity of which they had seen no display for a long time: "Father, no doubt you will have to study your Easter sermon; therefore, I wish you a restful night. If you will take my advice, you will not preach so severely tomorrow against the Evangelicals; that is quite profitless. Also you, dear Brigitta, leave me

alone. I wish to think undisturbed about the great news that my Elsa tarries in Germany, and that Hans von Hasselbach seeks her, while Kurt has lost his life as a renegade before Vienna."

Rigid with astonishment and anger, his wife looked at him; but his look remained so calm and firm, that, in spite of herself, she had to yield.

After the first enthusiastic greeting old Peter Lange said to Dortie and Hinnark in the presence of all their friends and acquaintances, who had gathered there in such numbers that one could scarcely turn around in the tailor-shop:

"Tomorrow afternoon you are to come to the castle to see the old gentleman. His wife and the priest wanted to talk him out of it, but he stood his ground."

"Thank God!" exclaimed Dortie, "this is the first step toward the happy marriage of our young lady."

All the former jollity returned to her in her dear old home. Hinnark had already told her about Luther's book, and Dortie was convinced that this would satisfy the conscience of her young mistress, especially if her father should send for her, which she could no longer doubt. However, severe storms were to test that sunny temper of Dortie's, before her logic should be justified by facts.

It was already late when the lovers finally had a few moments to themselves. The father, in the presence of the whole company, repeated Luther's evening prayer, and then all separated joyfully. In spite of all the raving of the old bitter foe, the Gospel of God's free grace as the only saving power had taken root at Uhlenhorst. Dortie and Hinnark had so much of a purely personal import to say to each other that no one would begrudge them a few hours of private conversation. But their life was so interwoven with that of Younker Hans and Miss Elsa that they were soon face to face with the question: "What now? How shall we get the joyful

message to the poor young master and the young mistress, and how can we unite them?"

"Master Hans is hardly likely to be in Augsburg yet," remarked Hinnark; "and to write to distant Vienna would answer no purpose, since he may already have left there."

"I can give advice," said Dortie. "Let Herr von Uhlenhorst give us two horses, and we will ride straightway to Bavaria to Miss Elsa, lest she should grieve to death in the convent. With the help of Luther's book we shall get her out of the convent and take her to Augsburg. What a surprise that will be if, instead of getting news, he receives his betrothed."

Hinnark's reply contained many ifs and buts; but he finally accepted Dortie's bold plan as the best; for it was clear to him that, even though his master were already at Augsburg, he could do very little until the conscience of the young nun had been freed through Luther. While on the way to Bavaria, he would send a letter to his master in Augsburg and inform him of everything. If he were in Augsburg by the time the letter reached that place, and, after hearing of Miss Elsa's whereabouts, should make up his mind to journey to the mountains forthwith, so much the better.

On the next morning the old church was full as it seldom had been. Nor was it only the holy Easter festival had attracted the people: it was the new pure doctrine, which had been learned in the last few weeks. They were also eager to know whether the priest would accept the advice of his old patron and cease his railing against the Evangelical doctrine. Moreover, Hinnark, the evening before, had dropped the remark in his enthusiasm that they would no longer endure scolding and abuse. In tense expectation, therefore, all had gone to church. The old patron sat in his pew, apparently more robust than he had been for years. His eyes sought Dortie Peters; when he saw her at the side of Mother Smid, he gave her a friendly nod of recognition. He appreciated what this simple

girl had done for his poor child all these years. Dortie's face flushed for joy; to the venomous looks that Madame von Uhlenhorst cast at her she paid little heed. From the conversation that she had had with the priest the evening before, she knew what to expect that day; but even her expectations were to be surprised by the developments about to take place.

The priest had studied his sermon, but not after the manner his patron had counseled. While he ranted on former occasions, that Easter-day, whose holy significance should have suggested to him a message of peace, he fairly raved. Bluntly he stated that a child of the congregation, while abroad, had denied the faith and was now distributing heretical writings and hymns, thereby dragging the poor souls into the hell reserved for heretics.

Old Herr von Uhlenhorst looked down in indignation; nervously the farmers stirred in their seats. Only the baroness, by her glances and repeated nods, expressed approval of the priestly deliverance. When, at length, he began to threaten the heretics with the wrath of God and the punishment of the authorities, Hinnark, with a loud voice, started up Luther's hymn of battle and freedom;

> "A tower of strength our God is still,
> A mighty shield and weapon."

Instantly Dortie joined in with a clear voice, and in the next moment almost the entire congregation accompanied the two, and this in a tone so loud that the priest in the pulpit could hardly understand his own words. Pale from anger, he stood for a moment dumb. Then he commanded quiet with all the force of his lungs. But nobody paid any attention to him and his doings. Unmindful of the fondness of the German Christians for melody, the pope for a thousand years had condemned them to silence in the service, permitting merely the "Kyrie Eleison" to be sung.

Luther loosed the tongue of the German people with his glorious hymns, and frequently also their

hearts, as here at Uhlenhorst. A Catholic observer has ventured the opinion that Luther made more heretics with his hymns than with his sermons. From this ban of silence in the service, so entirely opposed to biblical usage, Luther has freed the Christian world.

At the end of the first stanza the priest yelled once more:

"Quiet! Who has a right to speak and to sing in God's house save His priest." Hinnark, however, courageously began the second stanza, leaving the priest no choice but to go down from the pulpit and out of the temple. The congregation having finished the hymn, everyone offered a silent prayer, whereupon the people dispersed for their homes.

"We will repeat this every Sunday until the priest shall cease to rail at the Evangelicals, or, still better, until he goes away entirely and makes room for an Evangelical preacher," was the plan of the congregation by tacit agreement.

"The old gentleman is certainly on our side, even if the mistress helps the priest," was a remark made by others.

While Herr von Uhlenhorst was greatly surprised by the sudden burst of song, he had been so angered by the ravings of the priest that he rejoiced in his defeat. The powerful melody had taken his heart by storm, even though he did not clearly understand the words. His wife called upon him to forbid the people to sing, arguing that they would listen to him as their patron; but he did not move. Since he had heard from his Elsa, an entirely different spirit had taken possession of him; he knew that Luther's doctrine alone could set his poor child free from the convent vows that she had taken in despair. For this reason Luther's doctrine appeared right to him from the very outset. Also his son's peaceful death in this faith had left a prick in his soul, although, in his grief, he, at first, had paid little attention to it. After the service he submitted to the bitter abuse of his

wife for a while; however, when it became too much, he said:

"Now it is enough; leave me alone! Hinnark and Dortie will soon be here to tell me about my child. If you will listen to the report quietly, you may be present; if not, stay in your room! If the priest had followed my advice, he would have been spared this humiliation. I, too, am tired of his railing."

As on the evening before, so also now, the unexpected firmness of her usually so submissive husband almost took the woman's breath. When, at the call of his master, Peter Lange stepped into the hall, she went out, her face red with anger. She did not wish to show her helplessness again before the servant, who up to this time, had always trembled before her.

Unwilling to be commanded silence in the presence of subordinates, she did not come into the hall, either, when Hinnark and Dortie arrived. However, desiring to hear everything that took place, she opened the door of her room slightly and held her ear to the opening. In this way she could hear and see everything, while she herself remained unobserved.

"Now tell me all that has happened to my child since she left home four years ago," old Herr von Uhlenhorst said, almost solemnly, to Dortie Peters.

And Dortie Peters reported, according to the facts, how the priest and the mother already on their journey to Rome had tried everything to entice Miss Elsa into the convent, especially into that very one into which she had now really entered on her homeward journey.

"How my wife can be so obsessed as to try getting her daughter into misery!" the old man observed, shaking his head. "She knows from her own experience how dreadful the convent is if one does not enter from genuine inclination."

The eavesdropper at the door was startled, which slightly jarred the door. This did not escape Dortie's sharp ear; a glance in the direction of the

door convinced her that someone was eavesdropping. But pretending not to notice it, she rather made up her mind to speak even more plainly in order to give the poor woman an opportunity to be saved from her obsession. Nobody but Dortie alone knew the real motive of the woman. But by this time Dortie believed in the redemption of all men from all sins through Jesus' blood, and, for that reason, in the possibility of salvation even for such a slave of Rome as Madame von Uhlenhorst. Feeling her own need of indoctrination, and hoping to get help from the book for her conversation with the old knight, she had had her hand that very morning upon "The Freedom of a Christian."

"Madame von Uhlenhorst," she continued, "is still under the false impression that only as a monk or a nun can one merit salvation for himself or others. Dr. Luther, however, following God's Word, speaks quite differently. Hinnark, show Herr von Uhlenhorst Luther's explanation of the Second Article."

Thereupon Hinnark drew forth the recently made second copy of the book loaned him by his comrade in Vienna. It was Luther's Small Catechism, of which his father also, with great pains, had made for himself a copy.

"Sir," said Hinnark as he handed the little book to the master, "this little volume is a copy of a book borrowed from a wounded comrade in Vienna; it has increased and strengthened my peace of soul, found long before in the blood of Christ. The last few days I have made this new copy for you; will you graciously accept it from me?"

Eagerly the old gentleman seized the little book, read in it a little and then asked:

"Where is the place of which Dortie speaks?"

Hinnark pointed it out to him, at the same time repeating the glorious explanation with the solemnity of prayer, while the old knight followed the words in the book. Hinnark had written in so large and

clear characters, that, in spite of his dim eyes, the old gentleman could easily follow.

"You are bringing me a most acceptable book," he then said; "I will study it diligently. But now, Dortie, continue your report."

When Dortie then reported how Miss Elsa was cast into a dungeon lest her screams be heard, the fist of the old knight came down crashing upon the oak-table, while he shouted in undisguised wrath:

"And this they ventured to do to my child, a young woman of gentle birth? My wife must hear that, too; I want to hear what she has to say to this."

With this he was about to rise and go to the door.

Dortie, however, who had again noticed the door moving, said quickly in a loud voice:

"She is surely innocent of this, having believed the priest; she certainly believes him today yet, though her own daughter charges him with lying. Neither would she be more likely to believe me today than she did Hinnark two years ago. Give her time: she also may be won by the blessed Gospel and finally believe that the blood of Christ has blotted out her sins, so that the cloister vow of her daughter is not at all needed for that purpose. Having escaped from the convent herself, she would have her daughter make atonement for her. She will learn from his Catechism that we are saved alone through faith without any merit or righteousness of our own."

Hinnark was altogether astonished at that gay girl's ability to speak so earnestly and beautifully. On her long journey she had gotten a deep insight into the doctrine of salvation, at first from mother Marianne and then from the old merchant. In those days every Evangelical Christian was a missionary of his faith.

The old gentleman having calmed down, Dortie resumed the thread of her story. When she told about the rescue from the convent, he shouted again and again:

"Bravo!" But when she told about the treacherous attack of Kurt, he could scarcely find proper words to express his indignation.

"An Uhlenhorst!" he exclaimed. "Shame on the knave!"

When Dortie had finished her long account, the old man, laying his hand upon her head as if he would bless her, said:

"Never will I forget what you have been for my poor Elsa. But what is to be done now? Kurt has received his reward, as Peter Lange has already told me; Younker Hans is improving: now the greatest difficulty will be to rescue my child from the convent. Such a vow is a firm shackle: even today yet, my wife cannot get over that escape of hers from the convent, although she had not even taken the veil. For this reason she always wished our Elsa to atone for her. My godly Elsa will obey her conscience, I fear."

"That she will," now Hinnark said. "She has already told Dortie so. But I believe that I have the key in my pocket that will deliver her conscience. The wife of Dr. Luther gave me this work of her husband's, which convinced her and other nuns of the godlessness of cloister life. For a long time already your daughter has found comfort in the principal doctrine of the Lutheran faith: remission of sins through faith alone, without any merit of one's own. In those circumstances a rash vow will not forever bind her, especially since she took it in despair, without any inner inclination toward convent life whatever. This work "Of the Liberty of a Christian," together with Luther's Catechism, we will take to her; through these testimonies she shall certainly be delivered in her conscience, so that she can follow her lover."

"Tell her also that I, her father, command it," added the old gentleman. And according to God's command, children should obey their parents."

"That will contribute a great deal to her deliverance," suggested Dortie.

"But how will you go about it? You yourself

have said that in Bavaria heretics are burned, that every step of Dortie's is watched."

"We have already made our plan," Dortie answered quickly, lest Hinnark should betray that stratagem with the ladder.

She knew quite well that the woman was hearing all, and would certainly tell it to the priest.

"We wish to start as soon as you furnish us the horses. Younker Hans will ride to Augsburg, whither our Duke is also going. There we shall find him."

"You shall have the horses and all the money that is in the house; start soon and come home safely."

While Hinnark and Dortie were going home, highly elated because God had blessed their visit above all their expectations, and while the old gentleman was absorbed in Luther's Catechism, Madame von Uhlenhorst was walking to and fro in the neighboring room, wringing her hands. During Dortie's long narrative it frequently required her entire will power to keep from screaming. Everything sounded so clear and true; the simple maid could not have invented it. It also agreed perfectly with her daughter's character. Had not she, the mother, been exceedingly surprised herself at the reputed letter of Elsa's. Could it really had been a mere forgery? In that case the priest himself must be the forger and, in addition, a perjured rascal. But, those being facts, the whole structure of her faith must fall, a possibility she could hardly be expected to face. With trembling hands she jerked a casket open and drew forth a yellow manuscript. Then she went to the window and read the letter, probably for the hundreth time. It was the first time, however, that she really paid attention to the handwriting; was it not, after all, that of her daughter? It certainly must be. But was it not rather too regular to be Elsa's hand. At that thought a wave of burning heat seemed to engulf her very being. She cast the letter back into the casket and wrung her hands in despair. Suddenly she arose resolutely; in a

case like this only that man could give her clearness whom she had so long trusted unconditionally. She ordered her horse and rode to the priest's house, but learned to her surprise, that Father Anselm had gone to Luneburg immediately after the interrupted service, to report that unheard-of event at headquarters.

In her distress she was quite helpless. Fear that her daughter might escape from the convent in Bavaria, as she had from that in Rome, gave her a heavy heart. But an even worse fear oppressed her; namely, that she had been deceived by her father confessor,—that he really for the advantage of his order, had lied, forged and forsworn himself.

Then all the satisfaction she had made for her sin amounted absolutely to nothing: a man who could lie and deceive like that might also have imparted an entirely deceptive peace of soul.

Once more the austere priest stood before her mind's eye, uttering stern denunciations. Long since she had come to believe that she had sufficiently atoned for that grievous sin of hers by her strict life and her daughter's sacrifice; but today all her confidence in such merit collapsed before the accusations of conscience. This had slumbered for a long time, but now it was awake, and it gnawed like a worm. When darkness set in, and the servants announced supper, she at first pleaded indisposition and declined food. A lamp was brought and she was left alone. But in her restlessness she could not endure the sole company of her dreadful thoughts; therefore she went at length into the dining-hall, where her husband was already sitting at the table. With quite unwonted cordiality he exclaimed:

"I am pleased, Brigitta, that you are coming. You will be surprised at what so suddenly moved me to oppose you so decidedly. Come, sit down, and I will attempt to explain it to you!"

The good old master hated every kind of strife and really dreaded the explanation which was bound to come. He expected the most passionate reproaches

from his wife; for he knew how her soul clung to the thought of her daughter being a nun. Of course, this time he was firmly resolved not to yield; for the very happiness of his child's life was at stake. On the other hand, he dreaded continued domestic strife. How astonished he was when his wife sat down very quietly at his side and awaited his speech. What might be going on in her soul? Was it concealed anger which, since she had been commanded silence, would prevent her speaking with him altogether? In that case, however, she would hardly have come to the common meal on this evening, but would have dined in her private room. He did not know at all how to take his wife, and it was difficult for him to begin the conversation. At last he resolved to make a clean breast of it and tell her all, come what might. She would, at least, know where he stood. Then he said in as calm and friendly a tone as he could muster:

"Already two years ago I believed Hinnark more than the priest. That our Elsa did not write that letter, you yourself will certainly see. At that time I still believed that the Italians might have written it. But today I am convinced that Father Anselm did it himself, his oath to the contrary notwithstanding. According to the teaching of his church he certainly believes that he has committed a pardonable sin; for his order would get a rich haul through our Elsa. At that time I gave Hinnark all my ready money, about a hundred dollars; and I am going to do the same thing tomorrow again. I am also going to give these good people, who are sacrificing themselves for our child, a couple of horses. All this I am doing because I do not wish my poor child to perish in grief and despair, but hope to see my home, now desolate, once more brightened by her presence. I never could believe that the vow of a nun, based upon coercion or false information, could bring happiness and blessing. This afternoon I read a little book of Dr. Martin Luther's, according to which the whole principle at the bottom of monastic vows, yes, the whole time-honored

doctrine of the church about the meritoriousness of our works, is made to appear as an idle myth. Come, Brigitta, come! Read this book! Do it for my sake, if you will not do it for the sake of your own soul. We have really the right to believe that our dear Lord Jesus has atoned for all our sins. Hinnark also possesses a book of Luther's about the freedom of Christians, which he wishes to take to Elsa. Since I have read the Catechism, I have such a desire for Luther's writing that I have already sent Peter Lange down into the village to get this book also."

His wife allowed him to finish entirely. Now it had to be decided whether she was silent from suppressed anger or for some other reason. Worried, almost anxiously, her husband looked at her.

For a moment her eyes remained fixed on the ground; then she sighed deeply and said:

"I will read it."

That was more than he had ever expected. He was almost speechless from astonishment. There was not a bitter word about this book of the heretic, no reference to her duty as a parishioner first to ask the priest. What could have brought about the change? Full of joy, the old gentleman said:

"Then do it today yet, Brigitta. With that little book God has sent a great treasure into our house. In it I have learned more about Him and His dear Son than in all the legends of the saints, than in all the sermons of the monks."

Madame Brigitta remained silent and preoccupied, while her husband, during the progress of the meal, could not get through praising the Small Catechism. In the joy of his heart he would have preferred to speak of that lovely time when their Elsa, together with her lover, should go in and out with them in the old castle; but he feared to touch this sore spot at that juncture.

Just then Peter Lange came with Luther's book "Of the Freedom of a Christian." At once the old gentleman arose from the table and began to read.

Madame Brigitta went over into her apartment and did the same. In her distress of soul she continued to dwell upon her one great sin; therefore she looked at the outset for the Sixth Commandment in the first part of the book. "We should fear and love God, that we may lead a chaste and decent life, in word and deed, and each love and honor his spouse," she read with a shudder. According to this, was not her whole married life a great lie, a great sin? In fact, had she ever loved her husband, and not merely herself always? And had she always led a chaste and decent life in word and deed? Hitherto she had always thought of her one deplorable act of infidelity; now one sin after another arose in her memory, until she sprang up for very fear and said to herself:

"Would that I had never seen this book; it makes my anguish absolutely unbearable. But that serves me right. Why do I read the forbidden heretical book? When the priest returns, I have to confess everything to him."

With those words she hurled the book into the corner and resumed her walking. But the sting of the Law had already entered too deeply; she had already lost confidence in the priest too greatly to be satisfied with trust in his person and office after this.

"How can that old husband of mine make so much fuss over this book?" she asked herself. "Suppose I look at it again."

Once more she took the catechism. This time she began at the very beginning, at the first commandment. "We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things." Again she stopped. Was that not just impossible? In fact, had she ever loved God? Honestly she admitted to herself: "I have feared Him, but never loved Him. She did not yet know that even her fear had been only that of a slave, not of a child.

Having read nine Commandments at a stretch, she ceased when she had come to the last Commandment and the Conclusion. That the mere coveting of

something wrong was forbidden, had never entered her mind. There, however, she read:

"God threatens to punish all who transgress these Commandments." Yes, she had transgressed the Commandments and even endeavored to appease an angry God.

So far, indeed, Luther agreed with the Roman church, that God punishes sinners; however, he seemed to have more success than the confessor in awakening the conscience with his explanations. But what was it that her husband said about the forgiveness of sins? She wanted to read that, also, especially as she saw no other way out of her distress.

So she passed over to the second chief part. She passed over the First Article, desiring to read about Jesus Christ, whom she had hitherto always looked upon as a dreadful judge, with eyes burning like flames of fire. That her son had died peacefully after that wild life of his, trusting in this Savior, she knew. The priest had always made her believe that such trust of her son's was a delusion; that, if she did not seek to get her poor son out of purgatory through numerous masses for the dead, he would, most likely, never get out, or at least, only after many thousand years of suffering. But her faith in the word of the priest had suffered a shock, and for once she was willing to risk the exercise of her own judgment, lest she should entirely despair.

The article itself she knew. The beginning of the explanation seemed to her to be in agreement with the article, although the divinity and the humanity of Jesus Christ had never been brought so clearly to her notice before. But there could be nothing heretical about that. So it must be in what follows: "Who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, not with gold or silver, but with His holy precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death."

Here she paused for a long time, absorbed in profound meditation. That Christ had died for men, she had already heard in the old church, though

rather seldom. Generally the priest preached about penance and indulgence and the intercession of the Mother of God and of the saints, but about the atoning blood of Christ never a word. Precisely the latter it was that Father Anselm would always condemn as frivolous heresy. The rejection of all human works as a cause of salvation meant to him an easy way to heaven. Here, however, was expressly stated: "Not with gold or silver." Should all the gold and silver that she had already given to the church have no merit at all? In that case she stood poor and naked before God. The thought was terrible; her whole proud heart rebelled against it. Again she threw the catechism into the corner, nor did she draw it forth again that evening. She was still too thoroughly wrapped up in pharisaic work-righteousness; her heart was not yet sufficiently broken to grasp the comfort of the pure saving Gospel. But she found no peace; even after she retired, she tossed upon her bed for hours. Although the Law is the schoolmaster who is to lead to Christ, the noblewoman felt its smart too keenly to look in justifying faith to Him who freely forgives all offenses against the Law.

As far as her husband was concerned, his condition presented an entirely different aspect. Never before had he made so strong a mental effort as on that day; Peter Lange had already begun to fear that he would sleep but little that night. Excitement and every special effort increased his gout pains. But that day it was different. After he had laid the book aside, he walked up and down the room several times with such firm, rapid strides that his old servant was astonished. Repeatedly, while walking, he uttered the words:

"What a glorious book! That will certainly do it; that will free my Elsa."

When Peter Lange finally succeeded in coaxing him to bed, he said:

"Hinnark and Dortie must not start yet tomorrow; also my wife must read this book first. We will,

moreover, consider whether it would not be better for you and several other servants to accompany them to Bavaria. Peter, not for a long time have I gone to bed so happy. I do not only hope to get my child again: I also know my soul is safe; not until now have I really found my Lord and Savior. Luther speaks the truth; of this I am convinced. I am glad that they sang that scold of a priest out of the temple. Tomorrow I will write to his convent that I shall remove him if he refuses to accept the Gospel. The Duke will thereupon send us a true Evangelical preacher."

"O master, how the whole castle and the whole congregation will rejoice! Luther's catechism and his hymn have made the whole crowd of us Evangelical within a few weeks, insofar as we have not already been such."

"So much the better; please God, my wife also will finally become Evangelical. But now leave me alone; I believe, that the dear Lord will give me a restful night. I am very tired, but also very happy."

He was right; scarcely had he repeated his evening prayer, into which he had already begun to weave a few words from the catechism, when his tired eyes closed, and softly and sweetly he slept till broad daylight.

When Hinnark and Dortie came to get the horses and to take leave, Herr von Uhlenhorst said:

"You must tarry at least one more day, until we are through with Luther's little book. Here also it must set souls free; but say: would it not be better for old Peter Lange and several servants to accompany you? Peter is already a little stiff, but for the sake of his young mistress he will climb ten times into the saddle." Hinnark and Dortie had long since considered this matter; for their own sakes the project would have been quite desirable, especially since slander would have been prevented in consequence of such an escort. Hinnark's parents also wished it; but Dortie, who understood the circumstances best, said:

"We cannot accomplish anything by force. If we enter the village with four horsemen, everybody will know at once what is up, and the whole fanatical Catholic populace will oppose us. We should never even get to see Miss Elsa. As twice before, I must make my way to her by stealth and alone, and first bring her the books. If she is then convinced, we must get her out of the convent by a ruse." Voicing her sentiment clearly and strongly, the old gentleman, eventually, could not but agree with her. He was especially pleased that they wanted to ride straight to the convent and to inform Knight Hans by letter. Since the priest had left the afternoon before, it was more than likely that the convent would be informed from Luneburg; therefore haste was necessary.

"They have to travel pretty fast if they want to beat us," said Hinnark, after he had looked the beautiful horses over which Herr von Uhlenhorst had placed at their disposal. "If my horse is restored, we can take him, too."

"Then we shall have a horse for Miss Elsa, too," Dortie added joyfully, "and they shall not easily overtake us in flight." When they mounted their horses early the next morning, to the surprise of all Madame von Uhlenhorst stepped forth and said to Dortie:

"Say to my poor Elsa that her mother also will no longer put anything in her way in leaving the cloister."

Luther's booklet had had its effect, after all. Even though Madame von Uhlenhorst was not by far convinced of the unnaturalness of cloister life and of its opposition to divine Law, she, at least, recognized now that such cloister life, the result of coercion and not of inclination, could not be of any spiritual value. Now, that she herself knew inward suffering, she felt real sympathy for her daughter, slowly grieving to death in the convent. While she was not yet able to rejoice over the prospect of her daughter's return, since that would leave her without hope of obtaining forgiveness for her grave offense, the thought that

the daughter was suffering in behalf of the mother, had lost the charm that it had had for her these many years. However timidly, she had begun to think of the only Savior from sin, Jesus Christ; but she did not yet venture to trust in him alone. The veil of Moses, which the pope had brought forth again from the armory of the Pharisees, still covered her eyes too closely to permit the sight of the bright Sun of Grace.

"That was a good word, Brigitta," said Herr von Uhlenhorst to his wife; "that will break the last link of the chain in which the soul of my poor child has been languishing."

This time the farewell was not so hard for Hinnark as two years ago; at his side rode his Dortie, and they were riding forth to deliver their beloved mistress. The whole village had congregated to say good-by to them.

"When you come back, bring an Evangelical preacher along with you!" several shouted after them. "We do not want this Papist any longer. Also bring more books and hymns of Dr. Luther's."

Happy as on the occasion when they escaped from Rome, the lovers journeyed southward. Dortie poured out her full heart in songs of thanksgiving and praise. Already upon her home journey she had learned a number of Evangelical hymns; she now rapidly added to her store those that Hinnark knew. Thus spent, the time seemed fairly to fly.

Hinnark, it is true, had to think of the time when their joy was so suddenly turned to sorrow in Italy; but Dortie replied quickly:

"Younker Kurt is no more, and we do not have another enemy."

"How about Father Anselm?" queried Hinnark.

"Until he gets to Luneburg and sends a messenger from there to Bavaria, considerable time will have elapsed. At all events we are ahead of him. If I can only without hindrance look up our young lady the first night after our arrival, and deliver the greet-

ings of her parents, together with the books, we shall have won."

The less sanguine Hinnark had not yet cast aside all his fears, but he did not wish to spoil Dortie's joy. Moreover, he had a firm trust in God; therefore he surrendered to the joy of spring — that spring which shone in the bright-hued flowers and the bourgeoning trees, and whose power he felt throbbing in the love of his heart for the fair, pure creature by his side. His horse he found entirely restored, so that he could change mounts and ride the faster. Safely the couple arrived in Nuremberg, whence they addressed a letter for Younker Hans to Augsburg, whereupon they boldly started on the last lap of their journey.

CHAPTER XIII.

To the Stake.

FOR a long time they discussed how they might avoid observation when nearing the convent. At first Hinnark wanted to lodge in the little town in which his master had been sick so long, but Dortie said:

"The old inn-keeper, who intercepted my letter, would certainly also consider it his duty to announce our coming to the abbess."

"But we can lodge at some other inn."

"Our coming with three horses would soon be announced in the little town; we must get to the convent before anybody in the neighborhood finds it out."

Making a wide circuit around the town, they came toward evening to a village which Dortie had not yet seen, where, in consequence, they might hope to remain unrecognized. They went into the inn, ate

their supper, and fed the horses. To the questions, Whence? and Whither? they gave as brief answers as possible; in a roundabout way Hinnark represented himself as a mercenary traveling to his commander. Since soldiers often have their wives with them, Dortie's presence caused no surprise. What did cause surprise was their desire to continue the journey so late at night; but Hinnark explained that they were in a hurry and had to reach the next village that very night. When they reached it after nightfall, however, they did not stay, but rode through it as rapidly as possible, inasmuch as it was the church village where Dortie, in the previous summer, had attended the fair. After traversing it, they permitted the tired horses to go slowly. It might have been ten o'clock when they came into the neighborhood of the convent village. Tying the horses after leading them a little distance off the road, they stole to the tavern to get the ladder. Dortie, her heart palpitating, went into the yard alone; the watch-dog recognized her and really permitted her to do as she wished. Quickly they proceeded to the convent wall.

"Well, go in God's name!" said Hinnark; "May He direct our undertakings to a successful issue!"

A brief embrace, and the courageous girl climbed for the third time over the convent wall.

Hinnark, also, wished to climb over, but Dortie prevented him.

"Hide yourself over there under the tree: should I be discovered, it will not be so serious a matter, since they will not do much to a girl. But a man who violates the sanctity of a convent exposes himself to violent punishment."

Fortunately the night was very dark, so that she could not be readily discovered. Notwithstanding, Dortie's heart beat faster than ordinarily. Today there was more at stake. Twice she counted the windows; then she climbed up and knocked gently. She believed to hear a muffled cry as answer; nor was she deceived: the very next moment the window

opened; two arms embraced her through the bars, and a trembling voice spoke:

"Did you really return, you faithful girl?"

"Straight from Uhlenhorst. Over in the bushes Hinnark is waiting. Hans von Hasselbach was severely wounded at Vienna in a conflict with Younker Kurt and his Caspar, who both had deserted to the Turks. Herr Hans is waiting for us in Augsburg. Hinnark and I have come to bring you first of all the writings of Luther. Your father and mother have read them. Your father commands you to leave the cloister, and your mother is no longer opposed to it. We sang Father Anselm out of the temple with Luther's hymn. Everything is becoming Evangelical with us; you must go along at once."

The words just bubbled out of her mouth, and to hear them was almost too much for the poor nun. She had suffered severely in the past months, heart and conscience having been in a distressing conflict; conscience, however, obtained the victory. Now the poor heart was again stirred to its very depths.

"Stop, stop, Dortie! You merely lacerate my poor heart, which can never follow your enticement. Oh, if I only had never heard of the recovery of my beloved! Now I sin daily by thinking of him, and I am not able to help myself."

"This little book can help you; Hinnark got it from the hand of Dr. Luther's wife. It delivered her from her convent prison.

With this Dortie fumbled around in her bodice and drew forth the books, saying meanwhile:

"Here you learn from the Word of God that the whole cloister business is against the Bible. Its vows are ungodly and not binding. And in the catechism you have the whole glorious doctrine of the Gospel, which long since has brought peace to you. It is set forth clearly and plainly. Oh, if you could only make up your mind this very night to run away from the cloister! Your conscience would soon be quieted through Luther's books."

"Dortie, Dortie, your intentions toward me are very loving; but never can I simply step out and run away. Yes, I will read the books, although that is against the rules. If my conscience is delivered, nothing shall hold me here any longer. I cannot live long in this place in any event. But it is impossible for me to go tonight; I could not get out of the convent, since it is well secured. Moreover, I am the special object of their vigilance. Since your flight my cell has been searched several times."

"Hinnark has looked out for that: here is a keen file, with which you can cut the thin iron bars before your window, if you cannot get out of your prison in any other way. The worst is that Anselm the priest, without a doubt, is sending a messenger from Luneburg to this place, to prevent the order losing a rich nun. After the arrival of the messenger we shall soon be hunted out. Your cell will then be searched again, too. After that, it might be difficult to get you free."

"I will read the books as soon as it is day. Unfortunately I have no light. If my heart is convinced, I will try to saw through the bars. Return tomorrow evening at this time. God help me and you! But where do you expect to stay? I fear for you, who have risked life and limb for me. Hatred against the Lutheran heresy is indescribable at this place. It is reported that the emperor is marching hither from Italy; that, at the coming Diet at Augsburg, all the Evangelicals are to be outlawed and banned, and then to be wiped out with fire and sword. If you are taken, and it should become known for what purpose you have come hither, the worst must be expected."

"Therefore it would be best for you to decide at once. I could help you to saw through the bars; if necessary, I could also call Hinnark to our assistance."

This was the severest temptation for the poor nun that had beset her yet. Stepping for a moment

back into her cell, she sank upon her knees before her bed and wrestled with God. Had she any right to expose her faithful servants to obvious danger? Was she justified in breaking her vow? "Lord, not my will, but Thine, be done!" she implored, while the tears streamed down her cheeks. But she received no other answer from the Lord than what she had received in all her conflicts: "You dare not go against your conviction." Under the circumstances but one decision being possible, she arose and whispered to Dortie:

"I cannot act against my conviction; neither shall you risk your life for my sake. Ride away this night yet and carry a greeting to my Hans. Tell him that I will love him unto death; no convent vow can change that. In vain I have sought in the last months to tear this love out of my heart. If Luther's writings really deliver me from the bondage of the cloister, the Lord will show me ways and means to escape from this prison. You must not sacrifice yourselves for me."

"Our being sacrificed is not so imminent as you intimate," replied the brave Dortie. "In no case will we leave until we have attempted your rescue. This night we will ride back to the nearest village; we will wait there till tomorrow evening, and at the same hour as today we shall be back. My Hinnark is strong and will not readily permit himself to be captured. If, in the meantime, they only do not pen you into another cell. Hide the books and the file as best you can whenever you leave the cell."

"I will do that, to the best of my ability. But I am fearful about you."

"The good Lord, who has hitherto always helped me, will not leave us now," Dortie replied cheerfully.

After a touching farewell from her weeping mistress, she climbed down the ladder and was soon with her Hinnark. To her surprise, he grew very quiet after she had told him all.

He did not share at all her happy mood, but

rather the fear and the anxiety of the young mistress. He already had experience enough of Romish fanaticism to fear the worst. At length he said:

"If hate against us heretics is so powerful here, the anxiety of the young lady is certainly justified. Think of the martyr Henry von Zuetphen in our own country. Here in upper Germany, especially in Bavaria, several stakes have already been driven."

Much surprised and astonished, Dortie replied in a gentle tone of reproof: "When we have almost attained the goal, you would lose courage and permit our dear young lady to perish in the convent prison?"

"No, Dortie; I would rather give up my life. But if we remain here, I am fully aware that it may really cost our life. Should they take us, we shall, at the very least, receive a scourging and imprisonment for our attempt to abduct a nun. If Luther's books are found — and where should our young lady keep them hidden in her little cell? — we shall be known as heretics. In that case I shall not deny my Savior, who has so dearly purchased me." "But, Hinnark, who would expect the worst right away?" the girl rejoined, now altogether frightened. The thought of suffering and death made a deep impression upon the girl now, that it was expressed in words from the lips of her lover.

"We will prepare for the worst; if God graciously forestall it we will thank him the more." With these words of Hinnark the two set out for the return journey to the village which they had left but a short time before.

The village, which they reached about midnight, was about an hour's ride from the cloister village. The landlord, surprised at their late arrival, had to be satisfied with the explanation that they had come to wait for somebody there.

Since Hinnark showed himself liberal, he was not pestered by many questions the next day, either. Hinnark paid the bill for the day in advance, and when the inn filled up in the evening, he went, un-

observed, to the stable, saddled the horses, and rode away with Dortie, without attracting attention.

"So far everything has gone well," said Dortie, quite well satisfied. "In two hours, three of us shall ride back through this place."

"If God so wills," said her companion in a serious tone. For several days I have censured myself for tarrying, at the request of the old gentleman, a whole day in Uhlenhorst, after the priest had started for Luneburg. Then the matter did not seem so serious to me. But since I have found out the bitter feeling here against the Evangelicals, I am impressed with the danger we are facing. A good rider on a fleet horse could easily have gotten to the convent by this evening. I have a foreboding that something of this kind has taken place. Then you will no longer find your little lady at her window."

"O Hinnark, you frighten a person with your fear of specters," said Dortie.

She laughed while saying this, but her laugh seemed somewhat forced. Common sense told her that Hinnark's dark forebodings might be justified.

Thus the two rode to the cloister in the star-lit spring night. With even greater caution than on the previous evening they approached the place, led their horses into the woods, and got the ladder.

"Do you see? All your anxiety was in vain!" whispered Dortie. "In a quarter of an hour, I hope to be back with my young mistress; nowhere is anything suspicious to be seen."

Quickly she attempted to mount the ladder, when Hinnark took her once more into his arms, pressed her to his heart, and said: "Dortie, whatever may happen, do not deny your Savior!" Tears came into the strong girl's eyes. She laid her head on Hinnark's broad breast and began to sob. Hinnark administered consolation as best he could:

"Well, climb over now; God will not forsake us! Perhaps all my worry is really quite unnecessary."

She climbed across the wall, while he hastened

back into the shadow of the trees to guard the horses. Scarcely had he arrived there when a loud cry of anguish from Dortie pierced the still night, accompanied by loud yells from many throats.

"My foreboding! my foreboding!" groaned Hinnark. Then, with one leap, he was in the saddle and stormed toward the convent wall.

He had hoped that by standing in the saddle he could reach the top of the wall and swing himself over it. In this he would have succeeded, if at that very moment a whole dozen of peasants, armed with spears, axes, scythes, and pitchforks, had not come forth from the shadow of the wall and fallen upon him with fearful yells. He might still have escaped on his fleet horse, especially since he saw that he could not accomplish anything against such a superior force; but he did not think of flight for a moment. From the garden Dortie's cries for help were heard! How could he think of fleeing?

For a moment he defended himself, though without endeavoring to kill any of his adversaries. At last he called to them:

"Let up, I surrender."

Whether the peasants understood him or not, or, possibly, did not wish to understand him, for a long time they paid no attention to his words. To save his life, he had to keep on fighting until, covered with wounds, he fell from his horse.

Then a loud voice, the village priest's, cried:

"Let the heretic live that we may try him: he will scarcely escape the stake in any event."

Thereupon they desisted from belaboring him, and dragged him into the wretched hole used as a village prison. Although he was bleeding profusely, they left him lying on the bare floor, not, however, without giving him many kicks.

After quite a long while the priest of the town came with the mother superior. They gave his wounds a superficial dressing, whereupon they at once began to ply him with questions.

Above all else they wanted to know where Herr Hasselbach was at that time.

"I do not know," said Hinnark in accordance with the truth.

"You lie!" yelled the mother superior excitedly. "Did you not go to Uhlenhorst to find out for your master where Miss Elsa was, that you might, for a second time, abduct her from the convent?"

Now Hinnark knew to a certainty that a messenger had arrived from Luneburg; but he did not dream of giving the address of his master. He might still hope that Younker Hans had received his letter in Augsburg and would at once hasten to the rescue. If his enemies once knew where he was, it would be easy to place all kinds of hindrances in his way.

"I see that the thumb-screws will have to open your mouth," said the priest in anger. "What about your faith?"

"Without a doubt you have fallen a prey to the Lutheran heresy; the books which your paramour brought to the nun show that."

"I am an Evangelical Christian, and hope to be saved through the blood and wounds of Christ."

Without a moment's hesitation Hinnark made this confession, so that the priest and the mother superior were almost surprised at his frankness.

"Well, we will talk further about that when you are on your feet again. In Bavaria the old church still rules, and the civil government lends its arm to the destruction of the heretic brood."

With these words they left the prisoner. He, however, painfully folding his fettered hands, looked up, and prayed:

"My dear Savior Jesus Christ, thou hast suffered the most bitter death for me, a poor sinner. Give me strength to remain faithful, even though I should be led to the stake. Strengthen also my Dortie and the poor mistress, that they remain steadfast. Thou canst still rescue us; for Thou art the Almighty Son

of God. But should I suffer and die for Thee here, do not forsake me; permit me to suffer alone and help the poor feeble virgins to obtain their freedom through Younker Hans. Especially do I pray Thee to lead my master to a living faith."

So he prayed day and night, and the Lord heard his prayer according to his gracious will.

What Hinnark had apprehended had come to pass: a swift messenger with a long letter from Father Anselm had arrived on that afternoon from the convent in Luneburg. The mother superior had scarcely finished the letter, when, with several nuns, she hastened to the cell of Sister Agnes, as Miss Elsa was called in the convent.

For weeks Elsa had sat up every evening till midnight, waiting for the coming of Dortie. Apprehension and unrest had made her quite pale and feeble. During the past night, in the strife that tormented her soul, she had found no rest. The morning had scarcely dawned when she sat at the window and tried to read Luther's little book. She could not yet distinguish a letter. When she finally began to read, she almost failed to hear the little bell which summoned her to her morning devotion. The first book she read was: "Of the Freedom of a Christian." Like a veil of mist her superstitious view of the convent vow was drawn from her eyes as if by angel hands. She had scarcely returned from the first devotion, when she again pored over the little book. The suspense of her soul found relief in a stream of tears; but they were tears of joy and gratitude. She was happier now than at the time when she was rescued from the Roman convent. At that time she herself had hoped for rescue; for her shackles had been placed upon her by strangers. But here she had been without hope, since she had bound herself with an oath that, according to her view, could not be broken.

"But is all this not merely a lie and a ruse of Satan, who through love of earthly liberty, endeavors

to draw your soul into the shackles and torments of hell?"

Even this last fiery dart of the old foe she had to receive into her bosom, and unutterable was the pain it caused. But another gentle voice in her heart said, reassuringly: "Take the other booklet and read it." That was the voice of the good Shepherd, who would no longer permit his poor lamb to stray. She followed this voice, and raised with trembling hands Luther's Small Catechism to the light. Soon there was light and peace and joy in her heart. Here she found the same precious Evangelical truth that had enabled her brother Ulrich to die in peace: the doctrine of the remission of sins through faith in Jesus' blood and wounds. She had never seen that doctrine presented in so clear and glorious a way. Like her father and mother, she dwelt on the Second Article and, after coming to the wonderful explanation, she did not pass on until she knew that by heart. Then she sank on her knees and permitted her heart to flow over in praise and thanksgiving toward her faithful God.

"The man that wrote these precious words cannot, by any possibility, have put devilish error into the other book. No, no! at last my heart is free. For a long while I have felt that the nunnery never can be the home of inner peace. I had hoped that even in the convent I might keep my simple faith in Christ; but everybody — the priest, the mother superior, and the sisters, have tried to rob me of it. Now I am beginning to see how everything clings together, how the artificial holiness of convent life cannot accord with Christian holiness and righteousness. O my faithful God, deliver me from the convent, which has now become a real prison for me. Help my friends to rescue me, protect them from discovery, and make my poor heart strong, lest it betray itself."

Comforted and strengthened, she arose from prayer, hid her book and bethought herself of her file. She tried it softly on the iron bars and thought:

"In several hours I shall accomplish the task, but daylight might find it uncompleted. I must wait till night."

She had scarcely hidden the file when rapid steps approached her cell, filling her with anxiety. Her heart almost stood still when she saw the mother superior and three other sisters enter.

"Did you receive word from home?" the former asked Sister Agnes with a cutting voice.

The young nun grew pale, but answered nothing.

"Your silence is as eloquent as your blanching. Search the cell!"

The little books were soon found. The mother superior had scarcely cast a look at the title when she exclaimed:

"By the archheretic Luther! Who brought you this accursed literature, and in so doing violated the sanctity of the cloister?"

When Sister Agnes did not deign to answer, the angry mother superior screamed:

"Down into the penitent cell with her! We will see whether the scourge will loose your tongue. I have had patience with you entirely too long; your heretical inclination has long since been apparent to me. I had always hoped by the shepherd staff of tenderness to bring back the lost sheep; but now the rod of discipline must do its work and cast out the heresy with your blood!"

The three sturdy nuns grasped her arm and pulled her through the halls into the chamber of torture, where they disrobed her down to her hips.

"Sister Veronica, you are the strongest; take the lash and do not spare your arm!" commanded the leader.

Kneeling on the floor, her hands tied to a ring in the wall, the young nun lay helpless under the horrible blows of the lash. Her cry of pain should have softened stones, but it did not affect the hearts of these fanatical nuns, who thought they were rendering God a service by the brutal beating.

At the tenth stroke the mother superior exclaimed:

"Wait, let us see whether she will confess." But no intelligible word could be heard amid the wails of the tortured nun: as if mercy was a perfect stranger to her, the mother superior screamed:

"On with the scourging! We will see how long this heretical stubbornness can hold out."

Again the fearful lash fell upon her tender back, and the blood began to stream from the thick welts.

At the fifteenth stroke the mother superior once more ordered a halt, but again in vain. The cries of anguish of the tormented nun became lower and lower: after several more strokes they ceased entirely. But not until the head of the swooning sufferer fell against the wall, did the scourging cease.

Before it grew dark, the garden was searched, resulting in the discovery of the impression made in the ground by the ladder and of Dortie's foot-prints. Even the tracks of the three horses were found, and now everything was clear save the reason for Elsa's failure to take flight the first night. The file had also been found, so that it was clear that the iron bars need not have held her. Could her conscience really have held her? Had the mother superior, in that case, not really been too severe upon her? That the young noblewoman did not wish to betray her faithful servant could, of course, be explained. Possibly tenderness would have been more in place with this quiet nun. It was this reflection that, afterwards, saved Dortie from the scourge and secured a milder treatment for her than, in the circumstances, she could have expected.

The peasants, who had been summoned by the priest, had captured Hinnark; the nuns, hidden in the garden, had taken Dortie. The latter was taken into the convent and subjected to a rigorous cross-questioning. However, she did not disclose the whereabouts of the young master. Subsequently she remained unmolested, but was not permitted to see her mistress

nor leave the cloister. By shrewd questions she had learned from the talkative nuns of the scourging and, also, of Hinnark's capture and injuries. She was obliged to assist in the kitchen, and proved so serviceable to the fat cook that this good-natured old woman began to like her, and told her more than she could account for. For this reason Dortie soon learned that their horses were in the yard of the overseer of the convent grounds: in fact, she could see them in the pasture near the garden. These discoveries somewhat softened the shock she received when someone imparted to her the information that Hinnark, as soon as physically able, would be haled before a tribunal of the Inquisition, to be given the choice between recanting and the stake. Dortie was now busy making plans. The sight of her horses gave her thoughts a different direction. From the kitchen window it was only a few steps to the convent wall. She could nowhere discover a ladder, but the strong clothes props in the garden would be quite sufficient for scaling the wall. One day she discovered a fine saddle, together with a bridle, for the use of the mother superior, a woman of gentle birth, who occasionally rode horseback. Now Dortie's plan was made. As soon as she had learned the particulars as to Hinnark's threatening fate, she would ride to Augsburg to Younker Hans. If he should not have arrived yet, she would address herself to Duke Ernest, who was likewise coming to the Diet. She had traveled the road once before and could cover the distance in a few days. That nobody should overtake her was a task she could well entrust to her faithful steed.

Above all, she now would have to get into communication with Hinnark and Miss Elsa. Thus far her plans had progressed, when the cook told her that the Inquisition tribunal had convened for the purpose of examining Hinnark by the application of torture. So far, she was informed, he had remained contumacious, in spite of the application of the thumb

screws: should he remain obstinate at his trial, nothing would save him from the stake.

The poor girl's eyes filled with tears at the thought of her Hinnark; all the more was she determined to liberate him, whatever danger her attempt to escape and the ride through the night might entail. As a Christian believer she did not trust to her own wisdom and strength; day and night she besought God for help and deliverance. She was surprised most of all at her immunity from severe restrictions. Even the greater part of the money which Herr von Uhlenhorst had given them she carried in a pocket on her person. She had merely been relieved of her knife, which she had discovered in the same room where the saddle of the mother superior hung. Without qualms of conscience she appropriated it again. The explanation of such privileges was the mother superior's regret — such as it was — for the barbarous scourging inflicted upon the young noblewoman.

Another thought drove Dortie to action. She had been informed that morning by the cook that, if Hinnark, as all expected, would be burned at the stake, all the nuns, also Miss Elsa and, of course, Dortie, were to look on, to see, as a warning example for themselves, how this accursed heresy was punished. Nor was this mere gossip. The fanatical abbess had really rendered this decision; with ghastly cruelty she entertained the thought, that, in this way, she would most surely restore the straying sheep to the saving fold of Mother Church.

Dortie was dismayed, but not discouraged. Patiently she accepted the cook's well-meant words of comfort, and resolved that very evening to hazard everything to reach Hinnark and her mistress. She waited until the sisters had retired after supper, and the chores in the kitchen had been done. As soon as the corpulent cook, whose cell she shared, sank on her bed and began to snore, she loosed the bunch of keys from her girdle, opened first the cell door and

then the kitchen door, whereupon she climbed through the window into the garden. It was not the first time that she was out in the night; but now, that the life of her Hinnark was depending upon her pluck, she did not even tremble. Gathering several heavy props, she set them against the wall to aid her in scaling it. As a little girl she would fairly outdo the boys in climbing; this accomplishment now stood her in good stead. Safely she got upon the wall, pulled the props after her, and slid down on the other side with equal agility. Having hidden the props hard by the wall, she stole into the village.

The village prison was nothing more than an addition to the horse-stable of the village inn-keeper, who did not hesitate to use it as such when occasion required. Prisoners were rare, save here and there a tramp on a sojourn for a day or two, or a drunkard who had become too gay. Since the inn-keeper had been for many years also the squire of the rural community, he had the "hole" built to suit himself; and until that time it had served its purpose to general satisfaction. Dortie knew the "hole" very well; it was built of strong timbers, secured by an oak door, and supplied with air through an aperture six inches wide, made through the wall at a man's height. In addition, the prisoners on the inside were secured through chains strong enough to hold an elephant. Moreover, the mighty watch-dog of the homestead lay before the door, so that any further guarding of Hinnark did not seem necessary, even to the judges of the Inquisition.

Dortie saw the two fat Dominican monks who constituted the Inquisition having a good time at their beer, narrating meanwhile their heroic deeds. At that stage of bibulous development they were able to report as evidence of inquisitorial fidelity the execution upon the block of the Evangelical Christian Caspar Tauber in the days of King Ferdinand; the burning at the stake in 1527 of Carpentarius in Munich, and of the renowned preacher Leonard Kaiser,

in Schaerding, who was seized on the occasion of his journey to a dying father in Wittenberg. From that time the execution of Evangelical Christians had increased dreadfully, nine persons in Landsberg having been sentenced to death at the stake, and twenty-nine to death by drowning in Munich.

"This North-German is a real heretic," said the older of the monks to the farmers sitting around and listening with open mouths. "He will not repent, although we have given him time till tomorrow. He was still weak from his wounds; therefore we had to put him to the rack with caution. Tomorrow we will stretch his limbs a little more, but you may certainly depend on seeing the stake erected in a week. Since the duke is in Augsburg, we must secure his approval of our sentence there; that will take six days at the longest. He will not deny the church the aid of the civil arm; as a faithful servant of the church he has never done it yet. In a week from tomorrow you may invite the community to the burning of the heretic."

Dortie did not hear the dreadful words, but was to learn of them the following day. She rejoiced that all the farmers were sitting within at their beer, not intent upon speedy departure. To the old watch-dog, who recognized her at once, she threw a piece of sausage, which she had had the foresight to take along. After stroking him, she slipped up to the little air-hole. Standing on tip-toe, she could just look inside. Her heart beat as if it would burst when she softly called the name of her lover.

"Is that really you, Dortie?" came the question of the prisoner from within, "or did I just dream of you as I do nearly every night?"

"It is myself, Hinnark, and I come to bring you good news."

"Have you not been imprisoned and tortured with the young mistress."

"Not one finger of mine has been crooked; but they have almost scourged my poor mistress to death.

I did not see her since; but I think that I can get to her cell tonight. Being obliged to help in the kitchen, I made use of the opportunity to crawl out of the window; the wall I climbed by the aid of clothes-props. And how is my poor Hinnark? The cook said that they had tortured you today and would burn you next week."

"She is right; if God does not perform a miracle and send our master hither, I must burn, as so many have done in this popish land; for I will never deny my Savior."

These words, which pierced Dortie to the very marrow, were spoken in a firm tone. After several unsuccessful attempts to choke down her sobs, she asked:

"Did they hurt you much, Hinnark?"

"The dear Savior supported me. I continually remembered how much more our dear Savior suffered for us poor sinful beings, who was surely quite innocent. I enjoyed also a passage of Scripture, quoted by Doctor Luther in the sermon of his which I heard in Wittenberg: "Whosoever confesses me before men, him I will also confess before my Father; but whosoever denies me before men, him I will also deny before my heavenly father." Our Savior has said that. Hitherto He has given me power to remain steadfast; he will not forsake me in the future. But what is going to become of you, Dortie? That troubles me most. I fear that you could not endure the rack."

"God will not forsake either me or you. I could ride to freedom tomorrow; for our horses are pasturing close by the convent. After seeing Elsa I shall bring Master Hans to deliver you and my mistress. That she is now willing to go along is certain; otherwise she would not have been scourged. If I do not find Younker Hans in Augsburg, I will enquire the way to the quarters of our Duke Ernest. He is a popular man, and inclined to the Evangelical party: he will

not suffer one of his subjects to be condemned in Bavaria for the sake of the Gospel; anyway they will have to have their sentence confirmed at Augsburg; therefore I can still fetch help in time."

Hinnark always had thought highly of his Dortie, but never had he given her credit for being so wise and brave. He was almost speechless from astonishment. His love for life, of which he had almost despaired, awakened anew. Would God really help in this way? Had he not frequently helped him in a wonderful way? Hope revived, and, with returning courage, he said:

"Dortie, I believe that the dear Lord has suggested that to you. Try it in any event. But if it should not work out, may God protect you for this life. How gladly I would give you my hand, at parting, but it is chained. Greet my dear master in case you should meet him, and tell him that his Hinnark died happy in the faith of the Son of God. Greet my loved ones at home, and tell them that we shall soon all meet in heaven. And now go, lest they miss you in the convent and your whole plan fall to the ground. Your coming has brought me unspeakable solace. For life or death, I commit myself entirely to the will of God."

Dortie would gladly have said much more, but she recognized that Hinnark's admonition was justified. Therefore she took leave with tears, and even the stalwart Hinnark felt the hot tears streaming down his cheeks.

Dortie made her way in safety back into the convent by the method she had used in escaping from it. Everything being silent, she was convinced that she had never been missed. The fat cook was still sleeping; and, without waiting even for a moment, Dortie started for the cell where she knew Elsa to be locked up.

It was a long way. Up and down the steps it led; but Dortie was familiar with convent halls since her trip to Rome. The last days she had often spied around, till she knew exactly where to go. Panting,

she finally stood before the doubly locked door, put her mouth to the key-hole and whispered:

"Miss Elsa!"

It seemed to her that she heard a rustling sound as if someone had suddenly been startled, but otherwise there was no stir. She therefore repeated her whispered call. This time steps approached, and a soft voice asked:

"Is that you, Dortie?"

"Yes, dear mistress; and I have just come from Hinnark's prison."

"Oh, what a wretch I am," lamented the young nun, "even my beloved friends I am drawing into disaster. If I had only gone with you that first evening. Now Hinnark is condemned to die, as I was told today. This is all my fault."

"Do not grieve over the baseness of the Papists. You have followed your conscience, and you yourself have suffered most for it. How is your poor back getting on? Was the scourging really as cruel as the shuddering nuns make out in their account of it?"

"It is over with, and my wounds have healed; I have even been treated with considerable friendliness, although not permitted to leave this cell. But how are you getting on, my poor Dortie? Did they scourge you, too?"

"They have done nothing at all to me. I am helping in the kitchen; from there I climbed out of the window a while ago and went over the wall, and tomorrow evening I am going to clear out and ride to Augsburg, to fetch Younker Hans for the rescue."

"O Dortie, how can you, a weak girl, undertake that? Do you still believe in the possibility of a rescue? I have given up hope."

"If I do not find Younker Hans, I shall hunt up our duke, who is himself Evangelical, and will therefore surely not permit a child of his country to be burned without further ado?"

"I have been told today that in a week from tomorrow Hinnark is to burn if he does not recant.

We nuns are all to be present; the abbess hopes to detach me from my Evangelical faith by the dreadful sight, but such hope is vain."

"If you hear nothing from us before, just walk quietly to the place of execution. But be ready to jump into the saddle and to flee. It will be easier to rescue you from there than from the convent."

They continued talking about this and that. Dortie was not in a hurry; for even if she should be caught, it would only mean a beating.

Since they naturally talked Low-German, nobody could have understood their conversation, even if it had been overheard. For Miss Elsa it was a great comfort to enjoy the privilege of conversation with one in whom she had confidence. Dortie's cheerful courage became the prop upon which her own began to lean, however lightly. She promised Dortie to gather strength for the hour of decision by taking due care of her body. Like Hinnark, she finally admonished the daring girl to go away, and with hot tears and many blessings Dortie took her leave.

"In a week from today the heretic will burn," it was rumored the following day in the convent. Of course, Dortie cried, and the good-natured cook endeavored to comfort her:

"It is better for him to die in his heresy alone than to drag you and sister Agnes along to destruction. In the course of time you will like it in the convent. You can cook well; when I am no longer able to work, you may take my place. Even in Lent you can get many a good mouthful here, so that fasting will not hurt you too much, and you are sure always to get off with a light penance from the father confessor."

To the joy of the old woman, Dortie soon dried her tears, although the reason for it was not what the former thought.

During the day Dortie once more slipped over to the room in which the saddle hung. Everything was in the right place, so that she could find what she wanted even in the dark. Impatiently she waited

for evening. When, finally, everything was quiet and the cook sleeping, she secured the saddle and bridle, stuck Hinnark's knife into her belt, and got safely into the garden. By means of one of the props she first lifted the saddle upon the wall, thereupon she climbed up herself, allowed the saddle to slide down the prop to the other side, and, presently, she slid down to the earth herself. With a "thank God" she hastened to the pasture; quietly she called her horse and had the great joy of seeing it come up quickly. With hands trembling from excitement, she put on bridle and saddle. With another "thank God" she vaulted into the saddle, whereupon she rode slowly away.

Everything went according to her wish. Since it was not time yet for the moon to rise, no one noticed her. Once more looking in the direction of her lover's prison lying dimly before her, she said softly to herself:

"My life for your life—that thought shall strengthen me in my every fear and danger."

With that she urged her willing horse, which had rested for weeks, to haste, and soon the lights of the village disappeared behind her. It was a mild night in spring. Dortie looked up to the flashing stars, and her prayer arose to Him who rules above the stars. She had never been so entirely alone in the wide world. The lonesomeness and the stillness, together with the darkness, had a depressing effect upon her mind. Like all people of her time she was not altogether free from the fear of ghosts. Her strongly excited nerves at first caused her to see all sorts of fearful things, so that she reached for her knife more than once. She breathed more freely when the moon finally arose, and her fear nearly left her. She could not miss the road to the next town. In a trot she entered it lest she should be detained. Only the dogs paid any attention to her whatever; all the people were, no doubt, lying in bed.

On she cantered along the road by which, a short time before, she had traveled with mother Marianne.

Repeatedly she saw hamlets and isolated farms, which she recalled. By the position of the moon she could see that she was on the right road. When morning dawned, she could assure herself that she had gained such a start over night that even the best horseman would hardly be able to overtake her.

Coming to a creek, she gave her horse a drink and allowed him to graze by the roadside, while she herself ate some bread that she had taken along. In order to avoid embarrassing questions, she did not wish to seek refreshment at an inn the morning after her escape. After her short rest she went on till noon, when she put up at a tavern. While extremely tired from her long trip, she was happy, and grateful to the merciful God, who had sped her on the way.

A bright guilder, laid by her on the table, secured from the inn-keeper a mess of oats for her steed, while she herself received access to the best in the house. The inquisitive question:

"When and whither, and why alone?" she answered smilingly:

"Anybody who for some time has traveled as a sutler with an army is likely to go alone occasionally." That seemed satisfactory.

After the horse had received proper care, she went on until sunset. Becoming aware of exhaustion on the part of both herself and her horse, she lodged once more at a tavern, where she refreshed herself at supper. Having given directions to be called early, she retired. However, so great was her exhaustion that she could hardly say her evening prayer. After that, she was lost to the world until the milkmaid aroused her.

At breakfast she inquired of the landlord the distance to Augsburg.

"If you can keep up a stiff trot, you can get there by evening," was his answer.

That being her own calculation, she swiftly mounted her steed. On that day she was not over-

taken by anybody, and in the afternoon, when she beheld the steeples of the old town, she could say, with hearty thanks to God:

"The first and, I hope, the worst, part of my venture is over. My Hinnark may be led to the stake; but, if it pleases God, he shall not burn."

CHAPTER XIV.

In Augsburg and With Dr. Luther.

THE sickness of Younker Hans had lasted longer than he had expected, his mental depression, no doubt, having delayed recovery. After Hinnark had left him, he felt very wretched and lonely. While he, at times, reflected upon the words of the Small Catechism, it cannot be said that he found food in them for his inner life, since his knowledge of them was too superficial to stir and quicken his heart. Again he wearied of life. However, comfort and counsel were not far away. Scanning incidentally the face of his neighbor in the hospital, he recognized the soldier who had loaned Hinnark the catechism. It was evident that his days were numbered; for he looked worn and wan. Notwithstanding he observed on the face of the man an expression of such calm and peace as to surprise him. Nor did he have to search long for the source of such peace. In his folded hands the dying warrior held his Small Catechism. Just then, to judge by his calm and composure, he appeared to have read in it.

"I am convalescent and despairing, while that man is dying and quite cheerful," said Younker Hans to himself. "How is that possible? There is a miracle there that my reason is not able to fathom. Could it be possible that the Christian faith, especially the

Evangelical faith, which is taught in that book, is no idle dream, as I have hitherto believed? Could Christ really be the Son of God and live? As Elsa tells me, Ulrich, in spite of his wild life, died peacefully in this faith; she herself cleaves to it in body and soul, and my Hinnark would rather surrender life and limb than his Evangelical faith."

For a long time he dwelt on this bewildering problem. The old explanation that weak minds easily fall a prey to a plausible deception was devoid of force that day. Moved partly by pity for the dying man, partly by inner unrest, Younker Hans, who by this time was able to walk a little, approached the couch of the Lutheran warrior. He had been under the impression that the sufferer was a poor lone man, tranquilly resigned to death because there was nothing to which he could look forward in this life. But how surprised he was when he learned that the young man, born of good parents, heir to a fine farm, and betrothed to a lovely girl now looking for the homecoming of the lover, had followed his prince against the Turk for no other reason than the call of duty.

"And yet, you seem entirely reconciled to your hard fate?" remarked Younker Hans in his surprise.

"I was not for a long time," replied the youth with a weak voice, but this little book finally calmed my soul. I secured it in the army and studied it carefully, especially since I lay upon my bed of pain. Now I am sure that my Savior Jesus Christ has delivered me from all evil, and at last, when my hour has come, will grant me a blessed end and take me from this vale of tears to Himself. I have but one great wish: I should like to inform my godly parents of my impending end, happy in the wounds of Jesus; but, unfortunately, I cannot write, and I do not care to ask the Romish priests here to write my letters."

With these words the youth looked so pleadingly at Younker Hans that he could not but fulfill his wish. The knight himself was still so weak that writing was quite an effort for him. Nevertheless, he wrote a

long, long letter, the happy eyes of the dying man enabling him to forget his own pains. How touching were the contents of that letter, dictated by lips soon to close in death! The warrior thanked his dear parents for everything that they had done for him, at the same time asking their forgiveness for his many acts of disobedience and youthful folly. It was this note of repentance especially that touched the conscience of the knight: although the young man had evidently been an example of virtue, he felt the burden of many a sin nevertheless. He, Hans von Hasselbach, on the contrary, had committed follies of far more serious character, but hitherto he had never felt them as sins. The dying man thanked his betrothed for everything that she had been to him. He admonished his brothers and sisters by all means to be obedient to their parents, to fear God, and to walk in his way. All of them he comforted with the hope of a reunion above.

When Younker Hans had completed the letter, the dying man drew a small purse from the straw on which he lay, and said:

"These few pennies are all that I have left; but they will be sufficient to pay postage. I owe no man anything, and I need not pay God anything, since my Savior has done all that for me. I am unable to reward your kindness: you must be satisfied with the thanks of a dying man."

Younker Hans was deeply moved; he never expected so much sentiment on the part of a common soldier. As his eyes fell upon the booklet which the dying man still had in his hands, he said:

"Leave this catechism, which has brought you so much comfort, to me."

His eyes shining, the dying man said:

"Sir, if you wish to read my little book, you will cause me double joy: I shall get out of your debt, and you will experience its blessing."

"Yes, I will read it, and with greater devotion

than the first time; in the end there may be a treasure in it for me, as there was for you and my squire."

When the sun arose the next morning, Younker Hans saw the face of the warrior rigid in death. He stepped across the aisle and was surprised at the expression of peace—yes, of joy, which rested upon that face. He had seen many a one in death, but never a face so impressive in the last sleep. Involuntarily he sighed:

"If one could only die like that!"

The dead man's hands were folded over his catechism. Tenderly the knight drew forth his legacy, put the booklet into his pocket, and superintended the burial.

While this experience had put our knight into a tender mood, it gave his thoughts a decidedly wholesome direction. He now began to study the Small Catechism in good earnest. For the first time in his life he really understood the teachings of the Christian religion. Of course, his old unbelief was not conquered at one stroke; but the Spirit of God, working through His word, was in operation upon his hard heart. The vulgar denial of God, which had flowed so readily over his lips in the past, was now refused expression, even though sad doubt of God and His government of the world was still in control of his intellect. When, in the month of May, he finally made his way to Augsburg by slow degrees, he had one fixed purpose in his mind. "If I do not trace any good news, I will hunt up Luther, not only in order to redeem my promise, but with a faint hope that this great man of child-like faith can help me. That believers are so much happier than unbelievers, of this I am now convinced. Denial of God is bankruptcy of soul: that I have experienced myself."

Arriving in Augsburg, to his great astonishment, Hans found no letter at all from Hinnark. The innkeeper seemed far from frank and rather self-conscious when the knight asked for letters addressed to himself. It struck him that many of those present evidently

viewed him with suspicion. He soon learned that the Bavarian princes had made that inn their headquarters, imparting to it in consequence a decidedly popish atmosphere. When he made himself known as a citizen of Luneburg, he very soon had to hear bitter remarks about Duke Ernest, his prince.

Up to this time, in his proud unbelief, he had paid little attention to the stirring religious movement of the times; here, however, he was suddenly cast right into it. Sinister menace was in the air. The emperor, who was approaching from the South, would not dilly-dally this time, it was reported, but totally uproot the heresy. Such talk soon disgusted Younker Hans. He had his horse saddled and rode over to the inn where Duke Ernest was quartered. When, immediately upon his arrival, he inquired for information from home, he found no one possessed of any. He asked several princes and knights about the whereabouts of Elsa, but everyone pleaded ignorance. "I told Hinnark that he need not be in a hurry about coming," he said to himself, "but at least a letter should be here from him. Could anything have happened to him?"

The knight did not suspect that a Romish trick had been played, Hinnark's letter having duly arrived several weeks since.

When the tavern began to fill up, the landlord asked the Bavarian gentlemen one day whether they had heard anything of the imperial ensign Hans von Hasselbach, inasmuch as a letter had been lying there for him for a considerable time from his squire, Hinnark Smid.

At the mention of this letter the confessor of the duke listened very intently, leaned over to his neighbor, another priest, and asked in a whisper:

"Hinnark Smid? Is that not the heretic who attempted to abduct a nun, and is now awaiting execution at the stake?"

"Certainly, that is his name. We must attend

to the matter, lest anybody here should block the way of justice."

With that, both priests went to the landlord, and soon convinced him that it was his Christian duty to deliver the letter to them. They chuckled when Younker Hans really appeared on the following day and asked for the letter. In this way, almost against his will, the latter was drawn into the great movement which stirred all Christendom at that time.

While Emperor Charles was crossing the Alps, on his way to the Diet of Augsburg, the papal delegate, Cardinal Campeggi, handed to him that notorious papal edict which required the extirpation of contumacious heretics with fire and sword. Without a doubt, he was minded to follow the papal injunction; for when the Evangelical representatives presented to him the document containing the protestation of Spires, he, contrary to the laws of nations, kept them for a while in durance. His Lutheran brother-in-law, the banished Danish King, Christian II., returned to the embrace of the Romish church at Innsbruck, where Duke George of Saxony and the Bavarian princes showered upon the renegade their congratulations. And the Munich court, in order to shroud its former hostile relation to the ex-king in oblivion, fairly outdid itself in attentions to him, who now appeared to have everything coming his way.

As a good diplomat the emperor naturally, at first, turned a friendly face toward the Evangelicals. He probably cherished the hope that the handful of heretical princes and cities would give up their resistance, especially since there was such an overwhelming majority opposed to them. However, he was thoroughly deceived, just as the Evangelicals, especially Luther and Melanchthon, were thoroughly deceived in the character of the "dear, pious, innocent emperor."

Already on the fifteenth of June, at the brilliant ceremonies attendant upon the entrance of the emperor in the city, John of Saxony remained standing when his fellow princes bent the knee before the

glove of the papal legate, unmindful of the blessing it was intended to convey. Already on the evening of the day of his arrival the emperor summoned the Evangelical princes to his headquarters in order to instruct them through his brother, King Ferdinand, who acted as interpreter, that their preachers should henceforth keep silence, and that they themselves, on the following day, should take part in the Corpus Christi procession. They refused obedience, Margrave George declaring outright that he would rather kneel down and have his head cut off than deny God and His Word. And the landgrave of Hesse was heard to say that the imperial conscience of his Majesty had no lordship and mastery over their consciences. While the emperor marched in the procession with uncovered head in spite of the burning noonday sun, the Lutheran princes assigned as reason for their failure to participate in the procession that participation, for believers in the Gospel, would be an act of desperate malice, blasphemy, and frivolity. Such language the emperor had never yet heard. Compared to his great might, these German princes were very weak; yet, following the example of Luther, they were willing to risk all for their religious conviction.

Luther, to whom safe-conduct had been denied even by the City Council of Nuremburg by reason of being under the imperial ban, was obliged to stay in the castle of Coburg. This, however, did not argue inactivity on his part. His Schwabach articles were the basis of the Augsburg Confession, which Melanchthon had drafted at the command of the elector. His prayers and strong letters stiffened the spine of his too conciliatory friend Melanchthon, and kept all the confessors of Augsburg in alignment. Also, his voice was decisive at the adoption of the Augsburg Confession. "I am quite well pleased with it," was the opinion expressed by him on the fifteenth day of May. "Nor do I know how I could improve or change it: such attempt, however, would hardly be appropriate; for I cannot tread so tenderly and softly." How much

humility and self-knowledge there is in this glorious word! It really was divine Providence that the mild Melanchthon should draft this first Confession of our church, which all Lutherans accept. It emphasized the connection of Lutheranism with the ancient Church. Not the Lutherans have left the doctrine of the early Christians: it was the Romanists who repudiated apostolic Christianity by adopting the decrees of the Council of Trent, twenty years after the adoption of the Lutheran Confession.

On the afternoon of the 25th of June, the Augsburg Confession was read before the emperor and the estates of the realm; also Younker Hans stood in the garden of the bishop's palace and heard the glorious Confession. He saw the feeling of proud satisfaction that the Evangelicals experienced over their confessed attitude toward a cause which the highest authority of Church and State had in vain attempted to outlaw and ban. He also saw how depressed the Papists were. The ruler of Bavaria voiced their sentiment most plainly when he said:

"I see indeed that the Lutheran position is in the Bible, while our own is outside."

Luther's stay at Coburg during this Diet is a forcible reminder of his stay at the Wartburg nine years before. As at the Wartburg, so also here at Coburg he had to follow the course of events from a distance, at a time of tremendous stress, when he himself most gladly would have been in the thick of the fight. In either case, no doubt, the situation was planned for Luther by the good counsel and will of God. In his isolation at the Wartburg, he was able to form a calm, substantial judgment concerning the wild outburst of the Enthusiasts; here, in the solitude of Coburg, he learned to defer to the mild, ingratiating ways of Master Philip. Of course, again and again it was necessary to sustain the timid friend through weapons supplied from the arsenal of his own heroism, lest he should become guilty of godless compromise. "You have made a good confession," he wrote

repeatedly to the friends at Augsburg; "now let God take care of you, and go home with joy."

Nine years before, he stood almost alone—a poor despised monk; in spite of imperial ban and papal excommunication he had all these years been safe "under the heavens," to quote the words of child-like faith which Luther had used at that time in a letter to his elector. And now he had become the recognized leader of a great congregation of believers, for which princes and lords were willing to risk their all.

On the Wartburg, he was often in deep distress of soul; once Satan appeared to him in person to terrify him: but, in the name of God, he took up his heavy ink-bottle, and, hurling it at Satan's head, he put him to flight. At Castle Coburg, however, he was generally happy, full of precious humor. How splendid, for instance, is his description of the diet of crows and daws, held daily before his window. He was in a particularly happy frame of mind when he learned of the bold confession of his followers before the emperor of the realm. "I am exceedingly glad to have lived in this hour," he wrote at that time.

Younker Hans joined the messenger of the elector who carried the news of the issue of the Augsburg Diet to Luther. In his troubled heart there was still no peace. Now he wished to go to the soul physician who had been recommended to him so warmly by Elsa and his Hinnark, and of whose greatness he had just convinced himself at the Diet of Augsburg. What he had heard and seen was chiefly Luther's work.

Luther's frank, cordial manner made a deep impression upon him at once, as it had done upon Hinnark. Therefore, when Luther received the oral report of the events of that great day of Augsburg, he ventured to say:

"Dr. Luther, I am sick of soul, therefore I have come to you, chiefly upon the advice of my betrothed and Hinnark, my squire, who both have found happiness in your teaching. If you can spare an hour for me, I shall be very thankful to you."

"The Savior alone is the physician of the soul," answered the doctor; "I am only his poor apprentice. But I have some experience as regards spiritual distress, since I myself have floundered in it up to my neck. Tell me your trouble, but do it thoroughly. Please God, I will prescribe the right remedy. You spoke about your squire Hinnark. Is that the same Hinnark Smid who visited me this winter and took along a book for an imprisoned nun?"

Younker Hans pricked his ears at these words, and quickly inquired as to the time of such a visit.

"It must have been before Christmas. The squire came straightway from Vienna, where he had left his master in a hospital."

"It is my faithful Hinnark; and this is the first news I have had from him since his departure from Vienna."

"He seems to be a godly servant; already during the sermon my attention was drawn to him through his devotion, which prompted me afterwards to invite him to my house and table."

"Yes, my Hinnark is a godly man: but, alas, his master believes nothing, and is very wretched on that account."

"God forbid; but unburden yourself here and now."

"It is a long story, and the letters from Augsburg delivered by the messenger wait your attention. I shall return at a more suitable time."

"Nothing is hurting the letters, but a great deal is hurting you. I have no greater pleasure than to comfort such poor souls, if I am able; for I know what a torment it is when the soul grieves and there is no solace. I myself have sighed for solace, and no man was there to give it."

Then Younker Hans told his history and did not try to varnish or to hide anything.

The great Reformer permitted him to finish in his own way, looking at him all the time with his penetrating eyes, as if he meant to read him to the

depths of his soul. When the knight at length had finished, Luther said:

"My trouble was that I feared God too much because I did not know His dear Son; your trouble is that you fear God too little, because, in your proud, self-righteous way of thinking, you do not recognize the wretchedness of your sin, and fancy that you are able to govern this great world with your puny reason. But such wiseacres as yourself have always lived. Listen to the experience of godly Job."

With these words Luther took up his Latin Bible and translated from it the introduction to the Book of Job.

"Can you compare yourself in point of piety to Job?" he, thereupon asked, "and is your trouble greater than that of that godly man? In his despair he, also, once cursed the day of his birth, but in the end he had to acknowledge that he had spoken foolishly, that his suffering had come upon him merely as a trial, so that pride might be banished from his heart; and, eventually, the Lord blessed him twofold even as regards earthly goods. But read yourself the seventy-third Psalm, by the pious Asaph: it tells you of the offense he took at the prosperity of the wicked and the wretchedness of the godly."

With this he handed Younker Hans a German Book of Psalms. The whole German Bible, in its present form, did not exist in print until some years later.

Younker Hans read the Psalm, and then looked at Luther inquiringly, whereupon Luther continued:

"Do you realize how hard it was for him to understand the ways of God until he went into God's sanctuary and observed the end of the godless—sudden destruction and an end with terror? For you, too, the sight of the prosperity of the ungodly has been too much, and, in consequence of having brought no faith into your manhood from the period of youth, like Asaph, you have not only slipped, but, unlike him,

you have fallen flat on your face, so that at high noon you cannot see the very sun."

"Has perpetual night set in, because the darling of your heart has fallen for a while into the hands of the Papists and of Younker Kurt? Already Younker Kurt has received the reward of Judas in that he suddenly has been felled and crushed. It is plain that those Papists will get their reward, too, in due time. Hundreds of their cloisters are already empty. If your betrothed really languishes in a cloister, God can set her free, too, perhaps even through his humble servant Luther, as he has often done. You see, Sir Knight, you, like your father, have read the works of unbelieving humanists, and the devil has filled your soul with his hellish pride. I know those gentlemen who exalt the ancient paganism of the Romans and Greeks above the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ. Only too gladly would they have drawn me into their net, but God preserved me from it. If God had granted the realization of your wishes, you, most likely, would all your life have remained a proud, self-righteous infidel—a source of grief to your dear wife and of eternal destruction to yourself. Your hard heart will have to be crushed beneath the mill-stone of earthly distress before you will recognize your spiritual distress, which is the greater of the two. Better men than you and I have stood on the verge of despair, and yet, through God's fatherly providence, they finallly attained to happiness and salvation.

"Just let me point out to you one thing! When you blasphemed God there at Pavia, or when, in Vienna, you wished you were dead, had you not deserved a thousand times that the Lord of heaven and earth should crush a creature fit only for maggots to eat, and hurl you to hell? In His incomprehensible mercy He did not do it: He had patience with you, and even in this hour He is seeking your soul. Pray God for inner light; I will help you to pray. God favors the upright, as he says in his word."

Younker Hans felt overpowered by the words

of Luther. Unable to make any answer, he felt the need of being alone. Having briefly thanked the doctor, he went into his chamber, where he did something that he had not done any more since his youth. He fell upon his knees and wrestled with God, whom he had so long denied, but whose existence he was now beginning to believe. The Holy Spirit was working mightily in his soul through the word of His servant. Probably an hour had passed—an hour of grace for the poor sinner. While he was still lying on his knees, he heard Luther inquiring outside for him in an excited voice. Leaping to his feet, he hastened to the door, where the doctor met him with the words:

"In the last letter received from Augsburg, I find this note at the end: 'The Anti-Christ is still raging against the Gospel in Bavaria as much as ever. Today we hear that a certain Hinnark Smid, according to his name a North-German, stands before the Inquisition tribunal charged with heresy, and is awaiting death at the stake.'"

"That is my Hinnark!" exclaimed Younker Hans in greatest excitement. "But since he is in Bavaria, how does it come that he has not been in Augsburg first? Should his prison be near the city? Does the letter name any definite place?"

"No details are given; come here and read the words yourself!"

Younker Hans read, and exclaimed once more:

"How does Hinnark get to Bavaria, and not to me?"

"I presume that he found out the convent of your betrothed, and probably sought to rescue her; in doing so, he fell into the hands of the vampires," said Dr. Luther.

"That's it! That's it!" shouted the knight. "Dear Doctor, you not only have given my faith in God back to me, but I believe you have shown me the way to rescue my Elsa."

"Not I, Sir Knight, but the gracious God. I truly believe that God's wonderful providence is at work

here. But even though the matter, in its earthly aspect, should not end as you desire: even though your Hinnark should have to seal his faith with his death, and your Elsa should always have to stay in the convent,—never again doubt God and His grace in Jesus Christ. There is grace even in view of your shameful denial of God, of your deadly hatred against your rival; in short, of all your sins. I advise that you ride at once to Augsburg; a letter from me shall introduce you to the elector, from whose office my information has come. God bless your going out and your coming in, and help you to snatch your beloved from the claws of the Roman wolf."

With heart-felt thanks for all the good he had received at Luther's hands, especially for his deliverance from unbelief, Younker Hans left the Reformer, who, thoughtful of the alarmed knight's welfare to the last, gave him the parting counsel:

"Make haste slowly; if you injure your good horse by riding too hard, you are likely to arrive too late for the rescue."

The advice was needed; for, overpowered by his emotions, Younker Hans would have neglected his customary caution, would have ruined his horse by riding too rapidly, and then been obliged to travel on foot, since he was without the means to buy another. His purse being almost empty, he was already worrying where he could make a loan. He knew his own duke to be always in financial embarrassment on account of the great debt left him by his father Henry. But if he only knew the place where Hinnark lay imprisoned, everything would turn out well, and he would finally find his long-lost betrothed.

At the thought of her he became joyful, so joyful as he had not been since he had been in Pavia. If it became necessary, his duke should demand from the Bavarians the surrender of one of his subjects.

As he was cantering down the road, many things became clear to him which, hitherto, he had not understood. Did the landlord in Augsburg not look embar-

rassed when he entered? Should he have intercepted a letter of Hinnark's? Certainly, it must be so; very probably Hinnark had thought that his master had not yet arrived in Augsburg, and therefore, either alone or together with Dortie, had gone to the convent to comfort and to free Miss Elsa. Yes, that was evidently the explanation. If the Bavarians had gone so far as to intercept letters, they would not be likely to surrender a prisoner whom they held on a charge of heresy.

Angrily he clenched his teeth and gave his poor horse the spurs again, but remembering Luther's final words of warning, he slackened the pace. It was toward evening when, after a remarkably rapid ride, he passed through the portals of Augsburg. His road leading him past the quarters of his duke, he decided to make a short stop there to get what information he could, and then at once to proceed to the quarters of the elector, where the news of Hinnark's peril had come.

He was just about to dismount when he saw a horsewoman dashing toward him and waving her hand. The shout of joy coming from her lips all but caused his heart to cease its throbbing. Who could that be? That form, vigorous in health and youth, did he not know it? Was that not——

"Dortie! Dortie!" he exclaimed suddenly, fairly shouting the name that was the embodiment of his purest and mightiest joy. Her face, beaming with joy, told him that all was not lost as yet. He leaped from the saddle, helped her dismount with chivalrous courtesy, and embraced her in the overpowering joy of his heart.

"Did you come to get me, Dortie, to rescue Hinnark and my betrothed?"

Surprised the girl looked at him and answered:

"Are you already informed? Who told you?"

"Dr. Luther in Coburg, whence I have just come. Thank God that I have met you. And as to my Elsa, will she follow me? But where are they?"

"Near the town where you spent the whole winter. In despair my mistress, at that time, entered the convent. Luther's books, which we brought her after I found Hinnark at Uhlenhorst have set her conscience free. She looks for you with anxiety, having been scourged till the blood flowed. But, O Master, on next Thursday my Hinnark will be burned as a heretic, if you do not save him."

"Thank God, there still is time. Oh, I see more and more that Dr. Luther is right when he calls God a wonderful God. How could I ever have doubted Him so basely? Come into the tavern, Dortie, you brave, faithful girl. Now I need not annoy lords and princes to find the abode of my love; now we can set out at once. True, my horse is almost spent and yours likewise, and I have no money to buy others. Our duke must help us."

"Master, I still have the greater part of the money which Herr von Uhlenhorst gave us for the journey," said Dortie, as they moved toward the inn.

"You certainly are a glorious girl," said Hans, in honest admiration, whereupon they went into the tavern.

Duke Ernest, after hearing the account of his subjects, was at once ready to help. Considerately, as was his wont, he demurred to their setting out at once for the place where Hinnark and Elsa were languishing.

"You are both tired to death, and your horses cannot travel at all. Rest until tomorrow. You will still reach the place by Wednesday evening. I will send four horsemen along; then you will be able to rescue Hinnark, if need be, with saber strokes. That is surer than long drawn-out negotiations. Our main precaution must be that the Romanists do not learn about our plans. Therefore keep mum; for in Augsburg the walls have ears."

Younker Hans thanked his gracious duke heartily; thereupon he ordered something to eat, while Dortie continued to talk. She told the knight that she

had wanted to stop at the tavern where she had sent the letter, but when she noticed the Bavarian coat-of-arms and banners there, she deemed it wiser to pass on and to inquire the way to the quarters of the men from Luneberg, being convinced that her letter to Hinnark had been intercepted.

After eating she gave the knight all the money she still had with her, withdrew into her chamber, and, with a deep sigh of thanksgiving, she sank into profound slumber. She had been true to her trust, and God has rewarded her faithfulness. Now, that she had found her young master, all her cares had disappeared; not for a moment did she doubt henceforth the success of the projected attempt at Hinnark's rescue.

On the next morning, when the portals of the city were opened, the first to pass out on the road eastward were five armed horsemen, accompanied by a woman.

CHAPTER XV.

Rescue and Home.

"FEED the heretic well, so that he does not turn up his toes right away, but, under a slow fire, makes a decent stew to the dismay of all those that are ill disposed, and to the joy of the faithful." These were the directions the innkeeper had received from one of the inquisitors after sentence had been passed by one of the inquisitors upon Hinnark.

He carried out his instructions faithfully, and our Hinnark really had a good appetite. Dortie's short visit had greatly revived his spirits. If she really should get help, he wanted to be in a condition to wield a weapon in the unavoidable conflict. Should

God's providence have another object in view — and he was resigned to God's will—he would need all his strength more than ever, lest, in view of the stake, he should turn coward, and deny his dear Lord. The more he thought of Dortie's plan, the better it seemed to him. By and by he was almost sure that the dear Lord, who had hitherto led him so wonderfully, would still set him free. It was remarkable how he gathered strength in the last week. His wounds were healed, and none of his limbs had been broken on the rack. Since he spurned squibbling and equivocation, but confessed his faith freely and frankly at the outset, there had been no occasion for a protracted torture on the rack in view of his impending death at the stake. For this reason he had sustained no other injury than the crushing of his thumbs.

When Dortie's flight became known on the following morning, the mother superior, in her senseless anger, inclined to have Sister Agnes scourged once more. But she soon became convinced of Agnes' perfect innocence in regard to Dortie's escape. Nor did she fail to consider that, since the father still lived, the young man's inheritance might be lost to the order, should she, in the characteristic obstinacy of heretics, grieve to death. The abbess, therefore, concealed her anger as best she could, at once, however, sending word to the tavern, where the inquisitors were lodging. The messenger to the duke of Bavaria, who was to secure His Highness' ratification of the sentence of death passed upon Hinnark, had left a few hours before Dortie's escape became known. Since there was no apprehension of the duke's reversing the sentence, it was not deemed necessary to supplement the message. But a strong guard was placed around the prison. The farmer boys, under the leadership of Hansel, were quite willing to serve, believing that in this way they could be sure of a divine reward. Hansel, who hated Hinnark as a rival, was also very liberal with the beer, so that the time did not seem long to the guards. In addition, the inquisitors had

commanded the whole neighborhood to report armed at the first signal of alarm, in order to forestall a surprise. On the great occasion looked forward to, when the heretic was to receive his dues, every spectator was to come ready for action. The burning of a heretic was fast attaining to the dignity of a festivity in that popish country; in that particular community it was a long time that such a feast for the eyes had been offered. That the knight to whom the wench doubtless had fled, should not rescue the heretic—that these doughty peasants believed themselves warranted to promise.

Younker Hans, in order to avoid messengers that might be sent to the duke of Bavaria, had directed his little troop to make a détour. Notwithstanding, they had gotten near the convent village as early as the afternoon before the date of the execution. Cautiously they avoided the little town and the adjacent villages, spending the night in the forest.

At the inn, where they had last received refreshments, they had already heard of the coming event; even from there some people were going to witness the rare spectacle. The rescuers acted as though the matter did not concern them; however, they bought provisions for several days. In a deep, isolated dell they halted. Younker Hans, after taking off his armor, stealthily made his way to the convent at dusk, accompanied by one of his men. Before him, dark and gloomy, lay the walls of the prison that hid his love. Should he, on the morrow, at last win his Elsa, or should he perish in the undertaking? In fervent prayer he lifted up his heart to God, whom, at last, he had found.

From the village were heard raucous cries, coming from bibulous throats. Evidently a large company of men had surrounded the prison of Hinnark, a circumstance rendering inadvisable any attempt at rescue that night. The whole village would have been aroused while they were engaged in overpowering the guards, bursting the strong door, and filing the thick

chains. Above all, such an undertaking would vitiate any attempt at rescuing Elsa.

Beyond a doubt, Dortie's advice was best:—they would wait till morning and then attempt a surprise. Since the nuns were likewise to be present for the enjoyment of the dread spectacle, the double rescue would be easiest in the circumstances then obtaining.

Younker Hans himself was willing to watch throughout the entire night: but Dortie admonished him not to lose strength unnecessarily for the great day. Notwithstanding his apprehension that, at such a time, sleep was impossible, he was persuaded toward midnight to lie down, and he actually found a few hours of rest.

Dortie, who had done her full part, was full of courage: at a little distance from the men, upon a bed of moss, she spent the night soundly sleeping. No wonder the men felt something akin to reverence for a girl so clever, brave, and impregnable in her armor of virtue.

Already early in the morning the festive guests began to arrive, and to his horror Hans noticed that all the men were armed. True, the weapons consisted for the most part of hatchets, axes, scythes, and such improvised military implements; notwithstanding, with his five men he never could hope to engage those hundreds in combat. With an anxious face he peered from his thicket upon this surging mass, while Dortie quietly stole to his side.

When she saw the huge stack of wood surrounding a central stake, to which a chain was attached, all her bravery could not keep her from tears. Like a knife the thought pierced her heart:

"Suppose that all our efforts should be in vain, and my poor Hinnark be doomed to a wretched death at the stake? Oh, how much he must have suffered in all these weeks! O Lord Jesus Christ, for whose name's sake he has been willing to suffer all this, be merciful to him and bless our efforts to set him free!"

From the heavens toward which she gazed as she

spoke these last words, she turned her tear-stained look toward the knight at her side. His anxious face brought heaviness to her heart. If the strong knight despaired of the possibility of rescue, what could be expected? Then they all might as well make up their minds at the outset to join Hinnark's martyrdom. All these weeks past, never apprehending a failure of their efforts, her heart had not been so heavy as then. After her flight, the enemies surely had aroused the whole country about in order to frustrate at the outset any attempt to rescue Elsa and the heretic. And there! O there! was that not Hinnark even now on his way to the stake?

In spite of the great distance she would have recognized him at once, even if the executioner had not put upon his head a large paper-cap, covered with ghastly burlesques—dancing and grinning devils.

Dortie pressed her hands upon her heart, which was full to bursting. Where was all her courage now, all her joyful trust in God? She trembled like an aspen leaf; her strong nerves completely collapsed in view of her lover's fearful peril. Her burning eyes rested upon the slowly approaching form. How calm and self-possessed, as he walked to the stake. His eyes were turned upward as in prayer. Now he lowered his eyes. Did it not seem as if they were searching the forest at the very spot where they were standing. Oh! she would have liked to leap forth and give him a sign of her nearness, but she had sufficient presence of mind to consider that, by such imprudence, all would be spoiled.

"Sir, do not fail him!" she suddenly entreated passionately. "He would have risked his life for you, too."

"Your reminder is not necessary, Dortie," Younker Hans replied with a trembling voice; "however, I fear all will be in vain. But where are the nuns?"

At that moment the convent portals opened, and,

led by the mother superior, all the nuns came out in a solemn procession.

On account of the distance Younker Hans was not able to distinguish his Elsa from the other sisters, all being garbed exactly alike. He, therefore, asked Dortie, with twitching lips:

"Is it possible that she should not be among them?"

Dortie, who knew all the nuns by their walk and size, and, for that reason, was not likely to be puzzled by the identity of dress, answered after a moment's careful scrutiny:

"There she walks, at the left of the mother superior, who, no doubt, wishes to drive this heresy out of her thoroughly by using this object-lesson as a hint at the possible results of her own obstinacy."

At that a thought flashed through her mind. She had just called on the Savior for help and light; and, all at once, she clearly saw the way to success. Certainly, the dear Savior had given her the thought.

"Sir," she hurriedly said with her old vivacity, "seize the mother superior and the inquisitors! Place a sword upon their breasts, and threaten to pierce them if they do not give the prisoner free. Surely, they will do it!"

The knight grasped the arm of the girl with such force as to cause her pain; and, with a sigh of relief, he replied: "That way we shall and must succeed."

The same instance he beckoned to his comrades to bring up the horses. "If you get hold of the village squire, too—the fat inn-keeper yonder, it will be all the better: whatever he says and does, the peasants will approve."

Quickly everyone was in the saddle, awaiting the knight's command to attack.

"Sir, give me your spear; your sword is enough for you. I will cut the bands of my Hinnark, and give him the spear."

"You are surpassing yourself, Dortie; too bad that you are not a man: you would make a superb

general," replied Hans, now full of fight and glowing with the hope of victory.

As if to find inspiration for the coming bout, he let his eyes once more range in Elsa's direction. Just then he saw her eyes searching the forest rim, presently, however, to direct them once more upon the victim of popish fanaticism.

Every man then was shown the person he was to seize. Hans himself, to be sure of effecting his Elsa's rescue, meant to secure the sacred person of the mother superior. When the procession, with the condemned man at the head, arrived at the place of execution, the elder of the two Dominicans stepped up to Hinnark, held a cross before him, and asked him, amid the death-like silence of the crowd:

"In view of the stake, I adjure you for the last time to recant your heretical opinions and to return to the bosom of the church which alone has salvation."

With erect head and a loud voice Hinnark answered:

"I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord; who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, not with gold or silver, but with His holy precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I might be His own."

He did not get any further in the confession of his Lutheran faith: a stir of amazement at the glorious Christian faith of the condemned heretic passed through the crowd.

"Silence! Be quiet! the flames shall close his blasphemous mouth!"

When silence was again restored, the older Dominican said:

"Since Hinnark Smid has proved to be on obstinate, malicious heretic, we commit his soul to the devil in hell. His body, however, we hand over to the civil powers; for the church is not thirsting for blood."

With this last hypocritical sentence Rome has

endeavored for centuries to wash off the blood of unnumbered Evangelical martyrs; but quite as easily the Pharisees and Scribes could purge themselves of the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and shoulder the responsibility upon the heathen. The popish governments had no choice at all; they just had to fulfill the command of the church or become subject to the papal interdict.

While the words were not understood in the woods, the actions were followed and correctly interpreted. They saw coarse peasant fists pushing their helpless victim forward to the stake, where the executioner, clothed in red and with a chain in his hand, had taken his position. Younker Hans judged that the right moment had come; he was just about to give the signal for the attack, when something quite unexpected took place, which caused him to delay action for another moment.

The young nun, who stood at the side of the mother superior, our Elsa, pressed her hands upon her heart while Hinnark was making his confession, whispering meantime the same words to acknowledge them as hers. Then, when Hinnark was pushed toward the stake, she suddenly ran to his side and exclaimed in a clear voice:

"His confession is also mine. I, also, hope to be saved only through the blood and wounds of Christ. If you wish to stifle this Evangelical truth in fire, then burn also me!"

Firmly she looked at the older inquisitor, who, unable to endure the light in Elsa's eyes, looked down. A feeling of awe seized the multitude; the twofold good confession had not failed of results. But the second priest, aware of the momentary weakness of his companion, exclaimed:

"That can easily be accomplished. Take her back into the convent and cast her into the deepest dungeon, until the holy inquisition shall decide her case. And now forward with the execution of this accursed fellow!"

His words ended in a cry of fear, soon echoing from the lips of hundreds. All eyes had been concentrated on the events around the stake. This gave Younker Hans an opportunity to make a good start toward the stake before being discovered. In a broad line, the six horsemen galloped upon the crowd, determined to run down everyone who should offer resistance. However, everyone, seeing himself face to face with danger, had the discretion to leap to the side. Without meeting the least resistance, therefore, our little cavalcade found itself at the very center of the proceedings.

Shortly before the attack Younker Hans had said to Dortie:

"I see four priests there; since my dear Elsa now stands with Hinnark you hold the spear over the mother superior, while I seize the inn-keeper."

Everything turned out as planned. A cry of rage arose from the peasants standing at a distance; brandishing their weapons, hundreds came crowding to strike down the daring intruders. They all saw that there were but five men; while these, in an unexpected attack, might be able to run down several dozen, they could not possibly defeat several hundred. At that moment of suspense, above all those fierce cries of mingled fear and rage, was heard the piercing command from six strong throats:

"Surrender the prisoner! Surrender the prisoner!"

Five spears poised over as many priestly heads, a huge knightly sword pointed straight at the throat of the village squire, were sufficient intimation of the alternative to render its complete enunciation in terms of speech unnecessary.

Then Hans shouted with a mighty voice:

"Against every semblance of right you have condemned a citizen of the Luneburg land to death. He is my faithful squire, and before I permit him to be burned, I will thrust this sword through the neck of your magistrate. The same fate will overtake the

inquisitors and the mother superior, who have shamefully scourged my betrothed, a maid of gentle blood. As soon as one arm shall be raised against us, everyone of them is done for!"

Having spoken this, he shook the corpulent village judge vehemently, and thundered:

"Now command that they give up the prisoner, or you are a dead man!"

To give emphasis to his injunction, he brought his sword into sufficient proximity to the inn-keeper's throat to produce a tickling sensation. Immediately the poor Papist whined:

"Let him go, Hansel! Let him go!"

Hansel, realizing that other lives than those of mere heretics were in danger, obediently shouted to the guards:

"Let him go! Let him go!"

With sullen mien they obeyed the command and set Hinnark free. He, in a fervent prayer of submission, had made himself ready for his end at the stake. His hands still tied, he went to join the rescuers.

"We were like them that dream"—this glorious Scripture word from heaven was that minute fulfilled on earth in the faithful confessor, who had just been so near to heaven. Who would venture to describe the sensations surging at that moment through the souls of Hinnark and the young nun? When, a moment ago, they looked upon the vast host of armed men, all hope of rescue had vanished entirely. Even if Dortie and Younker Hans should be at hand in the forest yonder; if they should have a dozen assistants, what could these do against such a mob? And now, suddenly, what a change had been brought about by the providence of God!

Hinnark stood by the side of the stake, his eyes raised upwards. Miss Elsa swayed and would have sunk to the earth, if the two men who had seized her in order to take her to the dungeon had not supported her. However, her weakness lasted but a moment;

then, with outstretched arms, she fled toward her lover.

"Do not stir from the spot!" Younker Hans thundered to the village magistrate. Then he put his sword in the sheath, gave a shout of joy, and with mighty arm lifted his betrothed upon his horse.

"Mine at last! mine at last!" he exclaimed, after their lips had met in a brief kiss.

Then, drawing his sword once more, Younker Hans shouted to the mob:

"The inquisitors, the inn-keeper, and the mother superior will follow us to the edge of the woods; in the meantime Hansel will fetch the two horses belonging to us, and the mother superior will send a few nuns to the convent to get the clothes and all the belongings of my betrothed. But in ten minutes everything must be here!"

"Run, Hansel," cried the village-squire, and the trembling mother superior sent two sisters into the convent to fetch the desired property.

Dortie had scarcely seen the first step of her Hinnark into freedom when she raised a shout of joy. Turning her back upon the mother superior, she galloped to the side of the free man. Taking the spear into her left hand, she cut his bands with her knife and handed him the spear. With one leap he was upon the back of her horse; then, seizing the spear, he shouted into the baffled throng with mighty voice a few lines from Luther's battle hymn:

"The word of God they shall let stand
And not a thank have for it!"

The rescuers, with the prisoner at their side, rode through the dismayed mob. They clung to their weapons with nervy hands; for who could trust that armed mob? And, indeed, voices were heard:

"Kill the dogs, they will not risk to murder the priests and the holy mother superior!"

However, these were only individual voices; safely the brave Lutherans got away from the crowd,

and obtained an opportunity for a genuine greeting.

Hans and Hinnark both leaped from the horses, helped also the two girls to dismount and embraced them.

"My poor, poor love, how much you have suffered!" sighed Younker Hans when he saw the pale, wan face of his Elsa, which he now had the first opportunity of observing.

"The Savior has always been with me; he would have strengthened me to die with Hinnark, had this been God's will," was the reply.

"Elsa, he has become also my Savior."

Her pale feature brightening, the girl said:

"Then this brief suffering, this painful separation, has not been in vain."

"Dr. Luther told me the same. I visited him last week in Coburg, in accordance with your request. How the great man will rejoice when we call on him on our homeward journey."

"You were with Dr. Luther? Then I am no more surprised at your conversion. I have just finished reading his book on the Liberty of a Christian, to be freed immediately from all scruples of conscience in regard to the convent vow that I took when I thought you murdered. The most vehement grief to bear this winter was the thought that you were living, with no possibility for me, as I thought, to follow you with a good conscience."

Dortie burst into violent weeping when she saw Hinnark's crushed thumbs, and sobbed:

"My dear Hinnark, how did you ever endure this?"

"God gave me the necessary strength; now let us not talk about it any more, but look into the future joyfully! All danger is not yet passed; for the Papists may still pursue us. But God, who has helped hitherto, will continue to help. Praise and thanks to Him!"

After a few minutes the two horses had been brought. Hansel, who feared for the life of his

father, made much haste, and even brought Hinnark's weapons. Regretfully he looked upon the beautiful form of Dortie, who, happy, stood at Hinnark's side.

Dortie noticing his sad look, in her supreme happiness felt sympathy for Hansel. Accosting him, she extended her hand in farewell, and said:

"You were always good to me, Hansel, even though my long-time attachment for Hinnark prevented me from acceding to your wish. Look! This is best for you. Your parents would always have opposed our union in any event; and now, that you know me for a heretic, marrying me would surely not be according to your taste."

Shortly thereafter, the nuns arrived with the garments worn by Miss Elsa before her burial in a convent, and her other belongings. Younker Hans permitted his prisoner to return, while he and his little company cantered away, the only persons in a large radius not regretting that the auto-da-fé had not come off according to program. The inquisitors, who had kept as still as mice while the spears were poised at their breasts, now called on the mob to pursue; but no one obeyed.

A part of the crowd had already dispersed or had gone to the tavern disheartened, wishing to drown their disappointment in the cup; others, however, grumbled:

"Until we get our horses, they will be far away, for they will ride as fast as the horses can carry them. Our plowhorses cannot catch up with them. Moreover, it is a difficult matter to take up a fight with six heavily armed horsemen." So the pursuit failed.

In an isolated farm-house the young noblewoman changed her clothing, and discarded the habit of a nun. Successfully the little cavalcade escaped across the Bavarian border.

The four mounted warriors who had helped so much in the rescue, returned to Augsburg after accepting an invitation to Uhlenhorst. Gladly their companions in the conflict would have rewarded them then

and there; however, the funds in Dortie's possession warranted no such liberality.

In Coburg they made their first longer stay. Miss Elsa, after all, was still very, very feeble from the wasting grief of the previous winter and the cruelties to which she had been recently subjected. She needed rest; but, above all, she wished to make the acquaintance of that man of God, who, next to God, had done most in liberating her Hans and safely uniting him and her.

Luther was very happy over the successful rescue of Hinnark and Elsa. He gave much good counsel, especially to Younker Hans, who was still a beginner in faith: he also promised to send them a godly Evangelical preacher when the occasion should be favorable. Strengthened in body and soul, they started on the home journey.

Since there appeared no necessity for undue haste, it was possible for Miss Elsa to regain a good deal of her former vigor during the journey. Only one thing did not return so soon — the beautiful blond hair of which she was robbed when she became a nun. She constantly wore a heavy veil around her head, lest it should be discovered that she had escaped from a convent.

One evening, when Younker Hans had viewed her head for a long time, Elsa said, with a slight blush:

"Hans, would you like to see how they have disfigured me?"

"I am almost afraid," he answered, laughing, "and yet I am somewhat curious."

Having for some time traveled through Evangelical territory, the display of a shorn head could do no more harm. Therefore she removed the vail and exhibited a head resembling a field thick with stubble.

"My dear, dear love, how could they dare put shears to your beautiful hair?" her lover said with deep feeling, while he laid his hand with a caress upon

the dear head which papal fanaticism had robbed of its glory.

"It will soon grow again, even though its progress is less rapid than the healing of the wounds made by the scourge. May they keep my hair hanging before the shrine of some saint: I, with heart and soul, will cling to my Savior."

Being of a tranquil and serious mood by nature, she had become spiritual in the hard school of suffering. Her love was intense for the man who had twice rescued her from the convent, each time risking his life for her. More intense, however, was her love for her Lord and Savior, who had given His life for her in reality — in His bitter death on the cross. To serve Him and to lead her lover and her parents to Him, she considered the mission of her life. She had many other purposes in life, though, in her despair, she had thought them incapable of realization. Now there stretched out before her a beautiful, rich, holy, womanly life, the life ordained by God — the life of a daughter, wife, mother, and mistress of many servants, a life a thousand times more beautiful and holy than the self-chosen, sanctimonious life of poor nuns.

Father Anselm did not return after the congregation at Uhlenhorst had so thoroughly shown him the door. In his place the bishop had sent a mild, friendly brother, who, according to his view, was to win the good will of the people, and especially of the patron. In his he succeeded, but in a way quite different from that planned by the bishop. The Evangelical knowledge of the congregation was still very weak; therefore the new pastor for a time had things his own way, with the exception that hardly anyone would come to confession. When the new pastor was about to leave upon the occasion of his first visit to the castle, he was presented with Luther's Small Catechism. In presenting the book, the patron said:

"From this little book I have learned more of God and his dear Son Jesus Christ than I ever knew

before in all my life. Read the little book, and then give me your opinion of it!"

A whole week passed before the priest came again. Herr von Uhlenhorst had already begun to fear that he might have destroyed the heretical book; but how differently the nobleman's effort at evangelizing a Roman priest was to eventuate. The priest had the same experience as the godly Gruenhagen of Hermannsburg. Having never become acquainted with Luther's writings in the convent, he, at first, almost felt a superstitious dread at the thought of reading it. Finally, however, his curiosity prevailed, reinforced by respect for his patron, who had given him the book because he required his spiritual adviser's judgment upon it. But hardly had he begun to study it when he had the experience of the two disciples on the way to Emmaus on the occasion of meeting the unrecognized Christ. His heart burned within him. Was not that very truth divine? Was this not the very comfort which, according to the direction of his superiors, he was to offer those who despaired in the throes of death; namely, that, to be sure of salvation, one must trust only in the grace of God and the merits of Christ? There was no one who could give such help as Hinnark had given Pastor Gruenhagen the previous winter. The young monk was in consequence in great conflict of soul.

This was the state of things when, one summer evening, a great shout of joy caused him to look up from his book. Stepping outside, he was greeted by a strange sight. Before the tavern two men on horseback and as many women had halted, thereby causing a concourse of all the people in the village. At once he recognized the significance of this event: the knight von Hasselbach, together with his betrothed, his squire and Miss Elsa's servant had returned home. Already the knight, accompanied by the young noblewoman, was galloping toward the castle, while the other two were hastening toward the house of the tailor.

The young preacher went back into the house, fell upon his knees at his study-table, and prayed:

"My dear Savior, give clearness and peace to my mind through these people just arriving. It seems to me that the little book of Luther's contains Thy truth; but how can the church pronounce the ban upon him as an accused heretic?"

His unrest grew greater, his longing for the pure divine truth heartier. He knew that, as every night that week, but little sleep was to be expected in the approaching night. The conflict of opinion concerning the highest and holiest that man has upon earth had by that time made him extremely wretched. Then he made a great resolve: he took Luther's book and went to the cottage of the tailor. Father Smid was already known to him as an earnest man, inclined toward the new doctrine; and his son was best qualified to set his doubts at rest, since it was he who had first spread the Lutheran doctrine in those parts.

Astonished, almost frightened, they looked up when the priest entered; but how astonished were they when he stated his wish. Hinnark soon saw that his experience in Hermannsburg would be repeated. How gladly he therefore testified to his new faith! So much deeper was the impression he produced since he had been ready to confess his faith at the stake, as father Smid informed the priest. Above all, he could present the grace-hungry priest with a New Testament translated by Luther, together with a number of other Lutheran writings. Also to Duke Ernest their ruler he could point, whom he had seen at Augsburg in the act of confessing the Gospel.

The priest went home. His apprehension that little sleep would come to his eyes, was realized. But sleep was not missed. He read and read in the New Testament, a book which, so far, he had never seen. And as he read, he had the same experience as the disciples at the breaking of the bread: he recognized his Lord and Savior.

Old Herr von Uhlenhorst was almost overcome

with joy when Peter Lange bolted into his room and shouted:

"They are coming! They are coming!"

He did not need to ask who was coming; for weeks, day after day, an anxious watch had been kept, and the hope of a safe return of the lost ones had almost been abandoned. Now, at last, they came! The old servant had to support his master for a moment, and then permit him to sink into his chair: the old heart was nearly ready to stop beating then and there. But joy seldom kills.

"The joy of my heart, my poor Elsa, is coming home!" the father sobbed, as he once more arose and staggered toward the window.

He was just in time to see his child riding into the court. Her first look was in the direction of her father's window, and immediately she caught the father's eye. How she got down from the horse, and into her father's arms, it would have been impossible for her to tell later. For a long time she lay on the father's heart; long since it would have ceased to beat had the longing to see his only child not strengthened the old man. The cloth, behind which she concealed the temporary disfigurement received in the convent, having been dislodged in the fervent embrace. the first thing the father saw was the evidence of convent bondage upon his daughter's head.

"Child, my little Elsa! what have they done to you?" he exclaimed in dismay.

He had always known quite well that all nuns must sacrifice their hair; yet when he saw his own daughter so disfigured, the sight of it almost unmanned him.

Finally Younker Hans's turn came.

"Hans; we once did you a great wrong. My Elsa will right this wrong. But where is mother? Why does she not come to greet her daughter, who has arisen from the convent grave?" Inquiringly, almost anxiously, his eyes looked for his wife. He knew that since the departure of Hinnark and Dortie her

heart had been the battle-ground for a continuous conflict. Should it not be at an end yet? Should the old superstition concerning the atoning value of convent life still shroud her mind? That would have been a drop of gall in the cup of purest joy.

Also Miss Elsa looked longingly for her mother; even though she had experienced little motherly love, her filial love had by no means died out. She lamented the obsession of her mother, but hoped to be able now entirely to remove it, especially since she had at least given her consent for her daughter's return. Before the anxious thoughts of father and daughter could find verbal expression, the door had opened; slowly, almost timidly, the mother stepped into the room. That was no more the blooming form that she had been but three months ago. The severe conflict of soul through which she had passed, and which was not yet ended, had blanched her hair and cheeks. She had not taken many steps into the room when her daughter flew toward her with a cry:

"Mother! dear mother!" and fell upon her neck.

"Can you still love me, Elsa, after I have done you the very worst harm?"

Tears came to the eyes of the daughter as response to the question of the mother, who did not even know what cruel treatment she had received in the convent. However, she was pleased at the tender tones and the question itself. This was no longer that proud mother who was altogether in the hands of Priest Anselm. Without a doubt, the writings of Luther had had a liberating effect upon her soul.

And so it turned out to be. While Elsa told of her experience of monastic life, Madame von Uhlenhorst recognized with increasing clearness the folly of her old delusion. But more was needed to ease her heart. This also the dear Lord provided in a wonderful way.

On the next Sunday the church was crowded. Everybody wished to see the exiles back in their home. Even from neighboring congregations people

had come. How astonished everyone was when the preacher read as his text:

"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law."

Joyfully he confessed the pure Gospel, as he had learned it during the past week. After the sermon, which made a powerful impression, the preacher himself started the hymn which he had learned in the past few days from Hinnark: it was the Lutheran hymn which had driven the former priest out of the temple: "A tower of strength our God is still." The priest, too, had been delivered by Luther from papal superstition and bondage.

When the Holy Communion was celebrated, of course after the Lutheran fashion, the first person to announce for confession was Madame von Uhlenhorst.

Without any reservation, longing for rest and peace, she confessed her sins to her pastor. While the young preacher had but brief experience as an Evangelical pastor, he did have a grasp upon the heart of the Gospel,— that the blood of Jesus, accepted by faith in Christ the Son of God, cleanses from all sin. The hungry soul accepted it in living faith — and found the peace of a child of God, which Rome had often promised and travestied, but never given. She, too, was delivered through Luther; and, for the first time in years, she was thoroughly happy at the double marriage, an event than which none more blessed could be conceived—the founding of two Evangelical homes, which Rome was no longer able to blast.

[THE END.]